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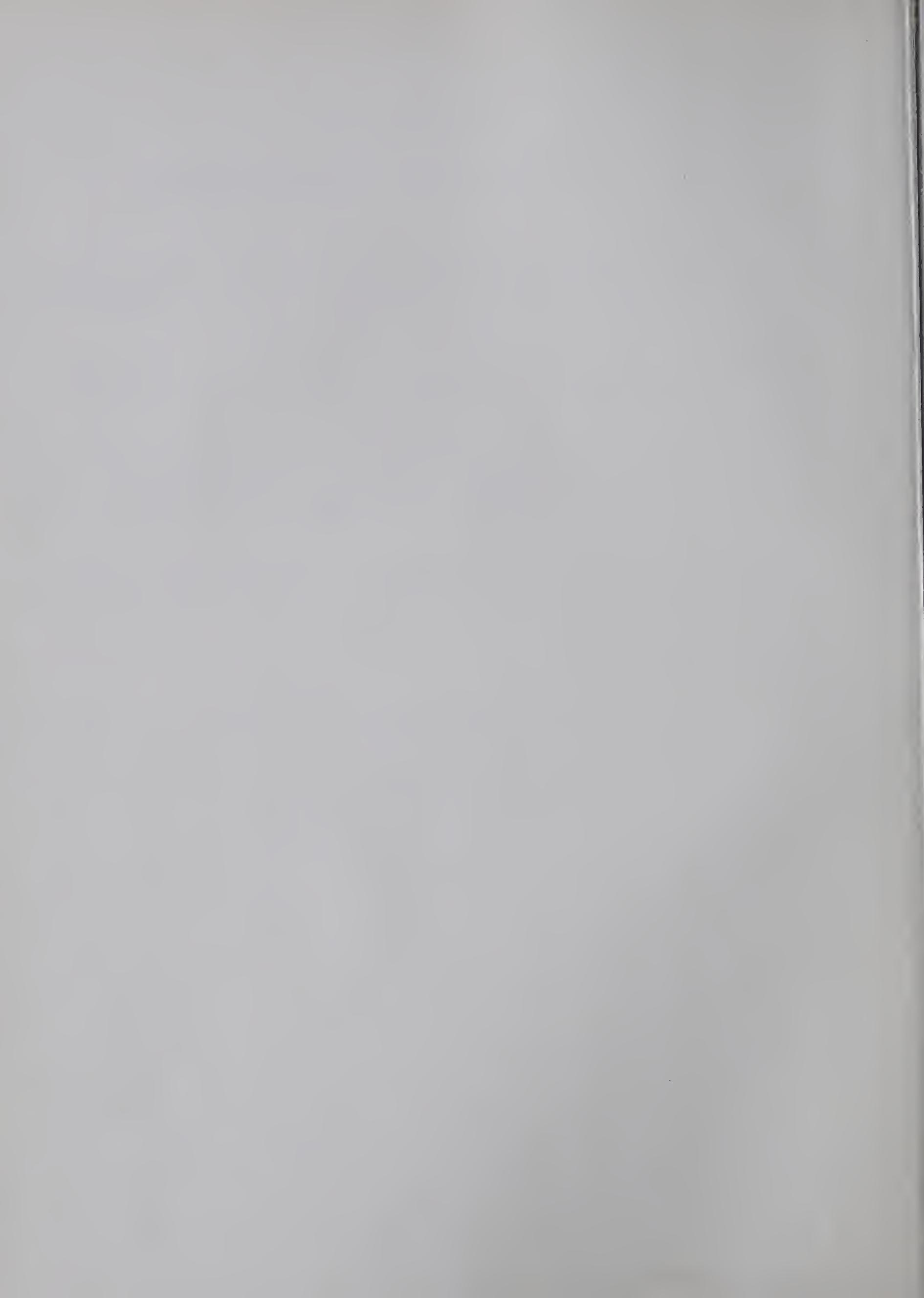
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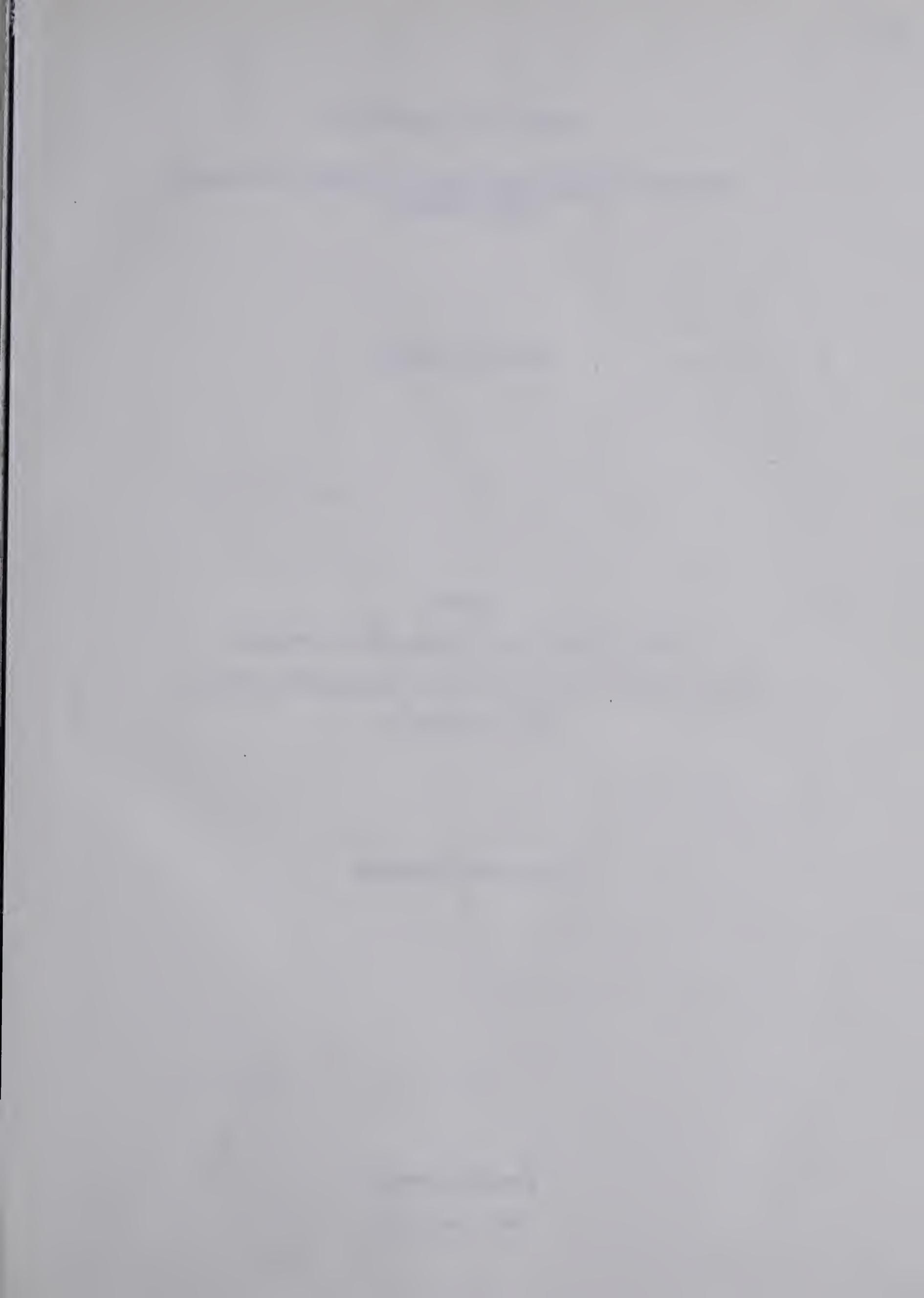
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN GREAT EXPECTATIONS AND RELATED  
DICKENS NOVELS

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
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The undersigned certify that they have read,  
and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for  
acceptance, a thesis entitled: "The Quest for Identity  
in Great Expectations and Related Dickens Novels,"  
submitted by Joanne Angus-Smith in partial fulfilment  
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## ABSTRACT

The thesis will treat Great Expectations as a coming together of several concerns, autobiographical, technical and thematic, recurrent in Dickens's novels. The thesis will focus upon the quest for identity and accompanying education of the hero, a recurrent and evolving theme in his earlier novels, Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Little Dorrit. As in David Copperfield, but less directly in terms of the hero's story, Dickens seems to be resolving dilemmas of his own life; he is attempting a form of spiritual history, aiming at adult understanding and repose. The problems which he examines in Great Expectations are those of relationships, of lovers, of parents to children and of the individual to society. The child-parent relationship is of special interest both because of its importance in a novel about "growing up" and because of Dickens's continuous concern with it in such works as Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Little Dorrit. Finally, the artistic problem of combining and developing these concerns to show the folly committed and insight gained in growing up and to allow for the introspection of a spiritual autobiography, is resolved in the technique of first-person narrative. This technique is attempted in David Copperfield and is accomplished with greater success in Great Expectations.



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## INTRODUCTION

The hero's quest for identity is a central theme in Great Expectations, a story of a "young man's development from the moment of self-awareness to that of his mature acceptance of the human condition."<sup>1</sup> In discussing this quest, I will use the word "identity" to refer to the hero's sense of self. In this novel the young hero, Pip, rejects his identity as a blacksmith's boy and expresses his desire for a new self in his wish to become a gentleman.

First, in the autobiographical novel David Copperfield and later, more fully in Great Expectations, Dickens shows that the hero's quest for a new self is intricately involved with the problems of "growing up" or of passing from childhood to maturity. In other words, Pip's quest for identity becomes the story of his education in life. In discussing Great Expectations as "Bildungsroman," I will show that Pip's quest for a self teaches him to discern illusion from reality and to assess and value human feelings in three areas of life: that of his relationship to the world and society; of his relationship with parent-figures; and of his relationship with lovers.

On the realistic social and psychological level, the hero learns through his experiences that he is an ordinary man with limitations and failings. A series of ironic reversals in fortune and relationships structure Pip's story. The orphan child Pip, who is made to feel guilty and an outcast by his sister, Mrs. Joe, and her class-conscious village friends, experiences a great sense of injustice:



My sister's bringing up had made me sensitive. In the little world in which children have their existance, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt, as injustice. It may be only small injustice that the child can be exposed to; but the child is small, and its world is small, and its rocking-horse stands as many hands high, according to scale, as a big-boned Irish hunter. Within myself, I had sustained, from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice. I had known, from the time when I could speak, that my sister, in her capricious and violent coercion, was unjust to me. I had cherished a profound conviction that her bringing me up by hand, gave her no right to bring me up by jerks. Through all my punishments, disgraces, fasts and vigils, and other penitential performances, I had nursed this assurance; and to my communing so much with it, in a solitary and unprotected way, I in great part refer the fact that I was morally timid and very sensitive (57-58).

His childhood sense of injustice is offset and his identity is defined by the loving blacksmith, Joe, who is also his moral touchstone. After encountering class-consciousness in the wealthy Miss Havisham and Estella, whom he visits as a child, Pip begins to discard these moral values and seeks to exchange his identity as a blacksmith's boy for that of a gentleman. He is motivated by infatuation for the haughty young Estella and falls into the self-delusion that Miss Havisham will make him a gentleman. Pip is unexpectedly transformed into a gentleman by an unknown benefactor and becomes a snob who is ashamed of Joe and who flaunts his new identity before his village society. When the snobbish young Pip discovers that his gentleman's identity has been made possible by the outcast convict, Magwitch, and not Miss Havisham, Pip begins to reassess himself, society and the world.

This re-evaluation makes Pip aware of his ingratitude to Magwitch, the falseness of society's class-consciousness, which ignores the worth of individuals, and the limitations of human nature and society. He finally learns to accept the fact that his desire for a morally and socially superior identity and his expectation of achieving such an



identity are unrealistic. At the end of his experiences, Pip's "new" self becomes ironically the old self, defined by Joe's redeeming love and Pip's recognition of his guilt. His new self is purged of his sense of injustice, his desire for gentility and his wish for revenge. In this novel, Dickens presents the complexities and ambiguities of life which Pip must learn to understand. In the process of discovering the reality which hides behind appearances, Pip begins to perceive the importance of love, self-sacrifice and self-reliance, and the mixture of good and evil within himself and other people. This lesson forms part of Dickens's Christian vision of imperfect man in a fallen world, symbolically implied in the novel. I will show in this thesis how Pip's final identity or sense of self consists of his identity as an ordinary man, as a prodigal son, and as a sinner. The Christian vision of the need for man to recognize his limitations, follies, guilt and his need for redemption through love and atonement provides an underlying unity and significance to the many complex levels of Pip's story. In other words, the story of Pip's quest and education is essentially a story of his spiritual experience.

In the course of his education in life Pip's quest for social acceptance, and freedom from contamination by sin and crime, changes to a quest for redemption and atonement. This level of Pip's story is presented through symbolic means. Dickens uses symbolic settings, images, names, and events to develop this most profound level of Pip's experiences. In addition to their identities as ordinary people, various characters in the novel form a spiritual continuum against which Pip is measured. Thus, Orlick may be said to represent anarchic evil, existing in the world



and potentially existing within Pip, while Joe may be said to represent the principle of good, existing in the world and in Pip.

In Pip's story, Dickens presents not only a penetrating analysis of the complex psychological, social and moral facets of an individual's growth to maturity but he also presents another fable of an Everyman. The reader sees this Everyman as he develops from a child. The story of the child's inevitable contamination by sin, initiated by his encounter with the convict, Magwitch, "the concretion of his potential guilt,"<sup>2</sup> has been "translated by means of allusion, imagery and parallelism into an archetypal, quasi-Christian retelling of man's innocence, fall, harrowing, and redemption."<sup>3</sup> As Stange points out: "Though Dickens' interpretation is theologically heterodox, he deals conventionally with the ancient question of free will and predestination . . . . Pip's fall was the result of a chain of predetermined events but he was, nevertheless, responsible for his own actions . . . ."<sup>4</sup>

The first chapter of this thesis will describe the evolution of the identity theme in three of Dickens's novels which precede Great Expectations. In the second chapter I will point to possible autobiographical sources of Dickens's consistent concern with this theme and suggest that Dickens seems to be resolving dilemmas of his own life through the medium of fiction in Great Expectations. Possible autobiographical parallels in Great Expectations will be suggested. In the third chapter I will discuss the education of Pip in terms of his relationships with and perception of the world and society. Relationships between parents and children which Van Ghent calls the "dynamic core"<sup>5</sup> of the novel will be examined in the fourth chapter. This chapter will



also explore Pip's quest and education in relation to romantic love, because this relationship will be shown to be involved with Pip's relation to certain parent-figures. In the fifth chapter I will discuss Dickens's handling of point of view and narrative technique in relation to the hero-narrator's self-understanding. Finally I will also illustrate the way in which Dickens uses first-person narration to show the contrast between the child's and adult's view of the world.



# I

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDENTITY THEME

An examination of Dickens's treatment of identity in his earlier novels, Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Little Dorrit forms a useful introduction to a study of Dickens's expansion and probing of this problem in Great Expectations. I will make certain generalizations about the changes which occur in the presentation of the hero's quest for identity in these novels and will support them by a detailed discussion later in this chapter. It may be said that these novels involve changes in the way the hero's sense of self or identity is formed and in the education of the hero in ever-widening social and spiritual contexts.

The hero's sense of lost identity and regaining of identity structure these three novels. In all of these novels, the hero is an orphan or is partially orphaned. He feels alienated from the class of society in which he finds himself and begins to feel the loss or lack of an inherited role which he can accept with dignity. In both Oliver Twist and David Copperfield the hero is a disinherited son of a gentleman. The achieving of identity in both novels is resolved primarily by an act of providence, operating through benefactors whose unexpected intervention parallels that of fairy-godmothers and godfathers; indeed, they are sometimes so called. These benefactors also serve as parent-surrogates for the hero. In Oliver Twist, the young boy is not aware of the exact nature of his lost identity and takes no action to find an identity. In Oliver Twist only the childhood of the hero is presented. The reader sees little



change<sup>in</sup> or education of the hero, who remains a paragon of virtue from the beginning to the end of the book. He achieves no self-knowledge and is never forced to examine himself. Indeed, the whole question of Oliver's final status as a gentleman depends upon the fact that he must be a pure, virtuous person, acted upon but passive in his role as a 'principle of good.'

In David Copperfield the young David, who is conscious of being disinherited by his step-father, undertakes an active quest to regain his lost identity as a gentleman's son. However, this identity is assured primarily through the providential intervention of an aunt. David Copperfield, which shows the education of the hero from childhood to maturity, marks an advance in the presentation of the identity theme because the hero is forced to examine his youthful self-delusions in relation to romantic love. David's adult sense of identity is resolved, as is Oliver's, by providence and in terms of dependence upon other people. Providence gives him an ideal wife upon whom he leans for emotional support, security, and identity. The failings of the hero are not deeply probed and are not placed in a broad social or spiritual context. His mature sense of identity lies in romantic love.

In Little Dorrit the education of the middle-aged hero who seeks an identity is expanded to include his self-examination in relation to all of society. A spiritual context, concerning the guilt of the hero and implied in Dickens's use of religious symbols, is involved. The exact nature of gentility, desired so much by Oliver and David, is brought into question in this novel. Clennam, the hero, learns to question the values of gentility and his relationship to society—a society which is part of a fallen world. He learns to accept his share in society's crimes against



the individual and is redeemed by his providential marriage to an ideal wife, Little Dorrit. The hero depends, as does David Copperfield, upon his wife for his final sense of identity, but here he must learn the true nature of a woman who is not posited as part of a conventional pattern.

In Great Expectations the resolution of the hero's identity through simple acts of providence, operating through benefactors or romantic love, is discarded. In Great Expectations Dickens expands the hero's recognition of youthful self-delusion about romantic love (advancing beyond David Copperfield), and of the necessity for the hero to question and relate himself to society in a fallen world which appears in Little Dorrit.

Pip, like Clennam, is redeemed by love, but it is not the love of a woman which saves him. Like Clennam, Pip learns to accept his place in a fallen world and in his small way to make it better. In the act of accepting his former self-delusions and sins, and of accepting responsibility for his place in society and the world, Pip paradoxically both defines his own identity and acquires an identity which is predetermined by the nature of the human condition.

The inadequacy of the resolution of one's sense of self in terms totally of romantic love or acts of providence operating simply through kind benefactors is shown in Great Expectations. Pip expects the resolution of his gentleman's identity in marriage to Estella and the permanent patronage of the wealthy Miss Havisham. In both expectations he is disappointed, and destiny is shown to operate in a way which does not meet his expectations.

In these four novels, then, may be seen three main movements in Dickens's handling of the quest for identity and the education of the



hero. First, the desirability of the hero's achieving what society calls a gentleman's identity in Oliver Twist and David Copperfield is replaced by an emphasis on the necessity for the hero to question the nature of gentility, his own motives and illusions, and society in Little Dorrit and Great Expectations. Secondly, a movement may be seen from the resolution of the hero's final achievement of a sense of identity through providence operating in the form of benefactors who are parent-surrogates and through romantic love, to the resolution achieved through his acquired self-knowledge, suffering and acceptance of his imperfections. Thirdly, the hero's attempt to achieve a superior or socially respectable self in an imperfect, fallen world in which human sin touches all levels of society is shown to be unrealistic in Great Expectations. Finally, one may say that in Great Expectations the hero's quest for identity in terms of becoming a socially superior gentleman changes to a quest for redemption and atonement.

"It's a question of identity" (221) says Dr. Losberne about Oliver Twist's crime of house-breaking. These words may be used to describe the plot of the novel, structured by the mystery of Oliver's identity. The orphan child, Oliver, is born into the unfriendly world of the poorhouse, and his experiences take him alternately, in picaresque manner, between the world of London thieves and respectable middle-class society. Throughout his adventures Oliver is oppressed by a sense of alienation from the world: "A sense of his loneliness in the great wide world sank into the child's heart" (9). Oliver is treated as a criminal and outcast by the workhouse officials and by the coffin-maker for whom he works. One gentleman predicts: "I know that boy will be hung" (13).



Oliver's famous request for more food in the workhouse represents his revolt against the world in which he finds himself and his will to live. His only overt quest becomes his desire to survive. His escape from the workhouse and from his employment takes him to London, where he is snared by London thieves. The thief, Fagin, discovers that he is a gentleman's son. Fagin plans to corrupt Oliver so that he will not satisfy the conditions of virtue, demanded by his father's Will, and will not be able to claim his inheritance. Oliver's successful resistance against corruption seems to be guaranteed. The fact of his gentle birth, unknown to Oliver until the novel's denouement, seems to give to Oliver an innocent self and identity that can resist all corruption. One might argue that Dickens appears to be saying in this novel that spiritual and moral superiority are values which belong innately to a person of gentle birth and social respectability. Graham Greene<sup>6</sup> speaks of the Manichean world of Oliver Twist. Oliver's world seems to be a world of black and white, or of goodness, embodied in the socially respectable gentlefolk, the Maylies and Mr. Brownlow, who are Oliver's benefactors, and of evil, embodied in the criminal and lower-class society of the thieves and poor-house officials.

Oliver does not actively seek freedom or justice for himself through becoming a gentleman. When, however, he has been recaptured by the thieves after he has been rescued and sheltered by Mr. Brownlow, who treats him as a son, Oliver does wish to regain the security of his life with Mr. Brownlow. Throughout the book, Oliver's thoughts turn to his unknown, dead mother. His quest would seem to be a quest to find the love and security of parents, and Oliver does find them in the persons of Rose



Maylie and Mr. Brownlow. As J. Hillis Miller says:

He is saved by the fact that he is naturally 'grateful and attached,' as Rose Maylie calls him, and, far from planning to seize by force the goods and status he lacks, is simply looking for someone to whom he can be related as a child to the parents who seem to him the source of value and the absolute judges of right and wrong.<sup>7</sup>

An element of passive expectation appears in Oliver's will to survive. As Miller also says:

There is little active volition in Oliver, no will to do something definite, to carve out for himself a place in the solid and hostile world, to choose a course oriented toward the future and follow it without regard to the sacrifices necessary. Oliver's volition is the volition of passive resistance. Oliver wills to live, and therefore resists violently all the attempts of the world to crush him . . . . But at the center of this fierce will there is passivity, the passivity of waiting, of expectation, of "great expectations" . . . . And without any external evidence at all that he is other than he seems to be, gallow's bait, Oliver must act as if he were what he seems to be, a good boy, the son of a gentleman.<sup>8</sup>

At the novel's end Oliver is removed from the hardships of existence in underworld society by the discovery of his father's identity, and by the providential intervention of his benefactors, the Maylies and Mr. Brownlow. His identity and future education as the son of a gentleman are ensured by the patronage of Mr. Brownlow. Oliver's final sense of identity is imposed by providence, his complete dependence upon parent-surrogates and by the fact of his father's identity. As Miller says:

He is willing to accept an identification of himself which does not derive, ultimately, from anything he has done, but only from what his parents were. In order to escape from the harsh world into which he has been born, Oliver is willing to live out his life facing backward into the past, spending with Rose Maylie 'whole hours . . . in picturing the friends they had so sadly lost' . . . . He lives happily ever after, but only by living in a perpetual childhood submission to protection and direction from without.<sup>9</sup>

In David Copperfield the adult narrator records his childhood and youth in autobiographical form. Like the young Oliver, the child, David, is a disinherited son of a gentleman, who seeks to find security. In this novel, the reader sees an enlargement in the young hero's sense of lost



identity, injustice, expectations and in the active nature of his search to find a secure identity.

The young David Copperfield is exiled from his happy home with his widowed mother by his new step-father and step-aunt. They send him first to a school where he is maltreated, and after his mother's death, they send him to a position in his step-father's warehouse in London. Unlike Oliver, who vaguely feels a sense of lost identity and injustice, David possesses positive feelings of loss and injustice. He expresses these feelings and his expectations in terms which show that he seeks an identity as a "gentleman's son." In the following passage, the "little gent" expresses his feelings of humiliation in being placed with socially inferior companions in the demeaning warehouse job:

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship; compared these henceforth everyday associates with those of my happier childhood—not to say with Steerforth, Traddles, and the rest of the boys; and felt my hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my bosom. The deep remembrance of the sense I had, of being utterly without hope now; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that day by day what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and emulation up by, would pass away from me, little by little, never to be brought back any more; cannot be written (155).

The "little gent" is ashamed of his contact with the lower-class society which, through his acquaintance with the Micawber family, has also brought him into contact with pawnshops and prison. He desires that his injustice should be remedied. David seeks to disengage himself from this society and travels on foot to obtain the help of his Aunt Betsey, a gentlewoman who, like the typical fairy-godmother, had unexpectedly appeared and presided at the hero's birth. His aunt, who functions as a benefactor, gives a new identity along with new clothes to David, and renames him Trotwood. Aunt Betsy supports, educates and brings David into respectable,



middle-class society, much to his satisfaction. Like Oliver, David finds a substitute parent and the idyllic security of childhood. His identity as a gentleman is assured.

David's infatuation with the childlike Dora, during his adolescence, is described as a type of fairy-tale happiness. He expects to find emotional security and support in his marriage to Dora but he becomes aware of the unsuitability of his marriage:

The old unhappy feeling pervaded my life. It was deepened if it were changed at all; but it was as undefined as ever, and addressed me like a strain of sorrowful music faintly heard in the night. I loved my wife dearly, and I was happy; but the happiness I had vaguely anticipated, once, was not the happiness I enjoyed, and there was always something wanting (697).

As Miller says, David searches: "for a relationship with another person which will support his life, fill up the emptiness within him and give him a substantial identity."<sup>10</sup> Despite the tragic deaths of Dora and his friend Steerforth, which lead to David's self-examination, suffering and temporary exile, the adult David never confronts himself with any profound failing and never achieves any deep self-knowledge. His self-examination is never related in any way to all of society and consists only of an attempt to probe personal relationships. The adult David admits only that he had possessed in youth an undisciplined heart which blinded him to the unsuitability of his marriage to Dora. He also recognizes that he has been blind to Agnes's love for him. David's final adult sense of identity is provided by the enveloping love of the parent-surrogates, Aunt Betsey and his old nurse, Peggotty, who frequently visit him, and by the love of his ideal wife. In his reference to the following passage of the novel, Miller points to the sense of providence which guides David's education, career and marriage to Agnes:



'If you had not assured us, my dear Copperfield, on the occasion of that agreeable afternoon we had the happiness of passing with you, that D. was your favourite letter,' said Mr. Micawber, 'I should unquestionably have supposed A. had been so.'

We all have some experience of a feeling, that comes over us occasionally, of what we are saying, and doing having been said and done before, in a remote time—of our having been surrounded, dim ages ago, by the same faces, objects and circumstances—of our knowing perfectly what will be said next, as if we suddenly remembered it! I never had this mysterious impression more strongly in my life, than before he uttered those words (566).

About the sense of providence in relation to David's attempt to draw together and present his adult vision and sense of identity, Miller writes:

This providential spirit has determined the cohesion of events . . . . The hero has not made his own life, and given himself a developing identity through the psychological power of memory; his destiny and identity and those of other people have been made by a metaphysical power, the power of divine Providence . . . . The turning point of his destiny is his recognition that it is Agnes who stands in that relation to him: '. . . without her, I was not, and I had never been, what she thought me.'<sup>11</sup>

Agnes becomes the center of David's selfhood: "Clasped in my embrace, I held the source of every worthy aspiration that I had ever had; the centre of myself; the circle of my life, my own, my wife; my love of whom was founded upon a rock" (864). In a sense, Agnes redeems David and anticipates the role of Amy Dorrit, who redeems Clennam. In David Copperfield, however, the hero and heroine are not related to each other in the larger spiritual context of the fallen world. Instead, "David has that relation to Agnes which a devout Christian has to God, the creator of his selfhood, without whom he would be nothing."<sup>12</sup> Although David claims that "I had worked out my own destiny" (857), he feels that providence has guided him.

After his awakening to the love of Agnes and to recognition of his "undisciplined heart," David is rewarded by a happy childlike dependence upon Agnes and the security of a successful career in respectable middle-class surroundings. Both Oliver and David escape from the



hardships and guilt which touch a human being, and both retreat into an idyllically happy existence defined by their dependence upon other people.

In Little Dorrit Dickens expands the hero's recognition of guilt in relation to the resolution of his identity and expands the hero's education to include his assessment of his place in society and in the fallen world. Dickens examines the sins and crimes of society against the individual and the individual against society.

In this novel, unlike Oliver Twist and David Copperfield in which crime and sin are primarily associated with the lower-classes, Dickens shows that the world is not separated into black and white or evil and goodness in terms of class position. He shows that moral and spiritual sins are widespread throughout society. These sins are shown to exist in the hypocritical, materialistic middle-class society of the Merdles and Mrs. Clennam and upper-class society of the Tite Barnacles, whose consciousness of their own moral and social superiority pervades the rest of society. Hypocrisy extends from the pompous Mr. Dorrit, the Father of the Marshalsea prison, to the rich financier and fraud, Mr. Merdle. In this novel, Dickens also begins to question the nature and irresponsibility of "gentility" and social pretensions which hide acts of exploitation against individuals. Rigaud, the villain of the novel, insists that he is a gentleman as do the other characters, like Mr. Dorrit, who are also guilty of moral or social crimes. This novel first presents with force Dickens's vision of the world as a fallen place in which even middle-class society is not a retreat for the hero from spiritual contamination or life's hardships. The universal condition of fallen man imprisoned in a fallen world is symbolized by the pervasive image of the



prison, extending from the lower class level of the Marshalsea debtor's prison to the upper levels of society in which the financier, Merdle, is, in effect, imprisoned in his mansion. Dickens's image of the sunshine suggests the bars of a prison: "Aslant across the city, over its jumbled roofs and through the open tracing of its church towers struck the long bright rays, bars of the prison of this lower world" (763).

The lonely, middle-aged hero, Arthur Clennam, initially drifts in a world, permeated by moral, religious and social hypocrisy. He is alienated from his materialistic society and yet is a product of it. He says:

I am such a waif and stray everywhere, that I am liable to be drifted where any current may set . . . I have no will. That is to say . . . next to none that I can put in action now. Trained by main force; broken, not bent; heavily ironed with an object on which I was never consulted and which was never mine; . . . always grinding in a mill I always hated; what is to be expected from me in middle life? Will, purpose, hope? All those lights were extinguished before I could sound the words (20).

Although he is by birth what society would call a "gentleman" or a man of respectability, financial security and education, Clennam is afflicted with a sense of lost identity, a feeling of being a "Nobody," and a paralysis of will. He is also afflicted with an undefined sense of guilt imposed during childhood by his fanatically religious mother, a believer in original sin without redemption.

Returning from a business position abroad, Clennam serves as an outside observer of the false values and social pretensions of upper and middle-class society which permeate to the lower classes and to the inmates of the Marshalsea prison. Before Clennam, who tries various modes of establishing his identity, regains a sense of self through romantic love, he finds that he has become involved in the sins of society against



individuals. His undefined sense of guilt becomes concrete when he discovers that he has ruined some friends by investing in a fraudulent scheme, and when he learns that his own family has ruined Little Dorrit's family imprisoned in the Marshalsea. While attempting to help an inventor to obtain a government patent, Clennam becomes involved in the labyrinthian processes of government and discovers that nobody will accept responsibility for government's and society's exploitation of individuals.

Clennam's love for Little Dorrit, his mother's seamstress, leads to his efforts to help her family. Accepting his responsibility for the bankruptcy of his friends, Clennam finally resigns himself to imprisonment in the Marshalsea. In prison, he undergoes an illness which may be said to be a symbolic trial and purgation for his share in society's sins. After his illness, Clennam is released from his spiritual paralysis and receives a new sense of his own identity. His final identity, given to him by the love of Little Dorrit and by his role as her husband, includes by implication of the imagery his recognition of his common identity with other men. Redeemed by his suffering and Little Dorrit's love, Clennam leaves the prison with his wife and descends into a useful life in the fallen world. After their marriage:

They paused for a moment on the steps of the portico, looking at the fresh perspective of the street in the autumn morning sun's bright rays and went down.

Went down into a modest life of usefulness and happiness . . . They went quietly down into the roaring streets, inseparable and blessed; and as they passed along in sunshine and shade, the noisy and the eager, and the arrogant, and the foward and the vain, fretted and chafed and made their usual uproar (826).

Just as David finds his sense of self in Agnes, so Clennam finds the center of his identity and the meaning of his life in Little Dorrit;



Looking back upon his own poor story, she was its vanishing point. Everything in its perspective led to her innocent figure. He had travelled thousands of miles towards it; previous unquiet hopes and doubts had worked themselves out before it; it was the centre of the interest of his life; it was the termination of everything that was good and pleasant in it; beyond there was nothing but mere waste and darkened sky (733).

In Great Expectations the hero's attempt to define his identity in relation to one woman, Estella, is shown to be unrealistic and inadequate.

Great Expectations, in which an adult narrator and hero, Pip, records his childhood and boyhood experiences in autobiographical form, brings together the strands of Dickens's evolving identity theme. The hero's self-delusion in terms of romantic love is drawn in from David Copperfield and combined with the hero's discovery of the crimes of society against the individual and the individual against society, drawn in from Little Dorrit. The hero is no longer permitted to find his final identity in terms of childlike dependence upon substitute parents or in terms of conclusively happy romantic love. The question of "gentility" and social respectability is re-examined in Christian terms and related to the hero's lessons in learning the value of compassion and love in a fallen world.

Unlike the heroes of the three preceding novels, discussed earlier in this chapter, the hero of Great Expectations is not what society would call a "gentleman" by birth. As a child, Pip is the helper of the blacksmith, Joe, who is married to Pip's older sister. The good-natured, simple Joe and the quick-tempered Mrs. Joe, who feels that she has married beneath herself, act as parent-figures who rear Pip in a class-conscious village society. The fact of the hero's lower-middle class origins is significant, because the novel seems to suggest that



the hero should accept his socially allotted position in life and should not seek an escape from it.

Just as Oliver Twist and David Copperfield experience feelings of injustice, the child Pip feels a great sense of injustice at his harsh treatment by his sister. He serves as a convenient scapegoat for Mrs. Joe, who vents her dissatisfaction with her life in her attacks upon Pip. In answer to his questions about the prison ships on the marshes, Mrs. Joe suggests that anyone who asks such questions is a potential criminal. The child feels a great sense of guilt because he plans to steal food from Mrs. Joe's kitchen and a file from Joe's forge for the terrifying convict, whom he has met on the marshes in the opening scene of the novel. The child steals the food because of his fear of the convict who threatens him. Pip conceals his theft from Joe and knows that he is morally wrong in doing so: "In a word, I was too cowardly to avoid doing what I knew to be wrong. I had had no intercourse with the world at that time, and I imitated none of its inhabitants who act in this manner. Quite an untaught genius, I made the discovery of this line of action for myself" (37). The child lives in terror that his crime will be discovered, but in the later chase and capture of the convict, Magwitch, by the authorities, the convict pretends that he does not know Pip and that he, himself, has taken the file and food.

After Pip's childhood visits to Satis House, the home of the wealthy Miss Havisham, a decaying gentlewoman, and her adopted daughter, Estella, the young Pip becomes discontented with what Estella snobbishly suggests to him is his inferior social position. Pip becomes infatuated with Estella and creates a tale of wild fantasy for his sister in order



to avoid revealing the true and precious nature of his visits. His self-delusion and imaginings about Estella and Miss Havisham begin in childhood. He is aware of his sin in lying about Miss Havisham's house and its occupants. He confesses his sin to Joe, who reprimands him. But after Pip has ceased to visit Miss Havisham and Estella, and has been bound with Miss Havisham's money as Joe's apprentice, his discontent with his inferior social position and occupation grows. He becomes ashamed of Joe's lack of education and genteel manners and continues to focus upon Estella in his imagination. His fantasies become mixed with the expectation that Miss Havisham will reward him in some way other than by supplying the money for him to be bound to Joe. This expectation has been encouraged by Mrs. Joe since his first visits to Satis House, Miss Havisham's home where Pip plays with Estella. Pip uses the knowledge of his friend, Biddy, to attempt to raise himself to an educational level which he believes will make him worthy of Estella's love. He cruelly ignores the love of Biddy, who suggests that his desire to become a gentleman in order to win Estella is also motivated by a desire for revenge. Pip realizes that he is a fool in his infatuation but still persists in his imaginings: "Some confounding remembrance of the Havisham days would fall upon me, like a destructive missile, and scatter my wits again" (125).

After Pip's dreams of becoming a gentleman have been made an unexpected reality by the announcement of the criminal lawyer, Jaggers, that he has "expectations" of wealth and that he is to become a gentleman, Pip mistakenly attributes the identity of his secret benefactor to Miss Havisham. He assumes a superior attitude toward his village society and envisions the day when he will return as a triumphant hero to the village



to dispense patronage. He believes that providence has visited him with a great destiny through the influence of Miss Havisham, whom he calls his "fairy godmother." The irony of the novel hinges on Pip's youthful self-delusion that she is his patron and that such a fairy-godmother figure can endow an individual with a new, socially superior identity. Miss Havisham, a jilted bride, who feeds her desire for revenge upon men by raising Estella as a cold-hearted siren, does not attempt to disillusion Pip in his mistaken belief.

Pip travels to London in quest of his new identity as a gentleman. He becomes a friend of Herbert Pocket, a penniless gentleman's son, who possesses the knowledge that a real gentleman is marked by kindness rather than by wealth, social respectability, education and snobbishness. Pip fails to realize this truth. In London, the young Mr. Pip, who becomes an arrogant snob, is supervised by the criminal lawyer, Jaggers, and Jagger's clerk, Wemmick. Forgetting his earlier guilty involvement with the convict who is his real benefactor, Pip wonders why he should be connected with the taint of crime and lower-class society through his contact with Jaggers. Pip receives his formal education with the other young gentlemen, Bentley Drummle and Startop, from Herbert's father, a penniless tutor. Pip leads a life of extravagance and dissipation, falls into debt and wonders why the social trappings of a young gentleman, including a servant boy whom Pip names the Avenger, are unsatisfying. His self-delusion grows as he nourishes the belief that Miss Havisham is educating him to marry Estella and to inherit her wealth.

When the blacksmith, Joe, visits Pip in London, Pip is snobbishly ashamed of Joe's awkward, rustic manners although he, himself, has been



corrected tactfully by the gentle Herbert for his own manners. When he makes frequent visits to the village to see Estella, Pip neglects to visit his friend Joe. Estella scorns Pip's love and warns him that she is cold-hearted. Pip ignores her warning, and despite the fact that he claims to be aware of her faults, his love for her persists.

The convict Magwitch, who is a transportee to Australia, returns to Pip's London lodgings and confronts Pip with the fact that he is the same convict whom Pip had helped in his childhood and that he is Pip's secret benefactor. Pip reacts with horror and disgust at the convict's confession of love for Pip and to his assertion that he is Pip's "second father." Pip's connection with the convict threatens his social respectability and his hopes of marrying Estella. Pip is horrified by his realization that he has been deluding himself about his relationship with Estella and Miss Havisham and by his former snobbish treatment of his faithful friend, Joe. This stage in Pip's experience marks the beginning of his education in life and the first change in his quest for identity. Initially he feels no sense of gratitude or love to Magwitch, whose motives, like the motives of Miss Havisham towards her adopted daughter, Estella, are a mixture of love and selfish desire for revenge. Magwitch is the victim of society, having suffered for the crimes of Compeyson. Compeyson, Magwitch's criminal associate and the man who has jilted Miss Havisham, obtained lenient treatment from the law because he exhibited what society would call the marks of a "gentleman." Disillusioned by the discovery of his benefactor, Pip plans with Herbert to smuggle Magwitch out of England by boat on the Thames river.

His plans for Magwitch's escape appear to be threatened by Orlick,



who is in league with Compeyson. Compeyson is determined to place Magwitch, illegally returned to England, in the hands of the authorities. Orlick, who has worked with Pip at Joe's forge and who has assaulted and murdered Mrs. Joe, summons Pip by letter to a secret meeting in a sluice-house on the marshes near their village. In the confrontation, Orlick reveals his violent hate for Pip and accuses him of responsibility for the murder of Mrs. Joe, which Pip denies. After his rescue and recovery from Orlick's attempted assault, preceded by his ordeal in the fire at Satis House, Pip carries out his plan for Magwitch's escape.

Pip is forced by his involvement with and loyalty to Magwitch, captured by the authorities, to accept their common identity as sinners. Pip's recognition of his identity as a sinner occurs during his prayer at Magwitch's deathbed. This recognition, preceded by the ordeal with Orlick, and Magwitch's trial and death, is followed by Pip's illness. This illness, like Clennam's illness in prison, may be said to be a symbolic trial and purgation of Pip's sins.

After he recovers from his illness, during which he is nursed by the faithful blacksmith, Joe, and during which he is like a little child under Joe's care, Pip's quest for gentility changes totally to one for forgiveness and atonement. He confesses his sin of ingratitude to Joe, and part of his final identity as a prodigal son is resolved when Joe forgives him. This identity forms part of Pip's larger recognition of himself as a sinner at Matwitch's deathbed. Pip wishes to return to accept a humble position at Joe's forge but his atonement involves the ironic fact that he cannot return permanently to the forge or marry Biddy. He discovers that Joe has himself married Biddy. The hero is prevented



from marrying and being consoled by an ideal wife; neither can he return to the security of a home as do David Copperfield and Oliver Twist. Pip must work out his spiritual atonement and achieve a mature state of independence by exiling himself abroad.

After a long period of self-imposed exile as a clerk in Herbert's firm, Pip, or Mr. Pirrip, returns to see Joe, Biddy and their children. Pip has become a successful businessman through hard, unremarkable work in the firm of Herbert, whom the young Pip, acting like a fairy-godfather, had secretly endowed with wealth. This bequest is the only act of endowment which is successful in the novel because it arises from Pip's purely unselfish motives. In the ruined garden of Satis House, which has disappeared upon Miss Havisham's death, Pip finds Estella, who has suffered for her cruelty and hard-heartedness in an unhappy marriage to Pip's rival, Bentley Drummle. At the novel's end, like Adam and Eve entering the fallen world, Pip and Estella wander hand in hand from the decaying garden. Pip's education and quest have led him to accept responsibility for his own life and his own identity as an imperfect man in a fallen world. The scene at the end of Great Expectations recalls the closing scene of Little Dorrit but suitably the happiness of Estella and Pip is not so strongly implied.

At the novel's end, Pip has passed from childhood to maturity, and the "shades of the prison house"<sup>13</sup> have closed upon him. In the process of his quest, he has acquired an educated heart and has found a realistic identity in relation to other people, society and the world. He has learned to see the true nature of people, society and the world, which had been obscured by his search for a gentleman's identity, justice



for himself, and romantic love. Pip's final sense of self involves a deeper understanding of his relationship to society and of his share in the human condition than is the case of Dickens's earlier heroes.



## II

### PIP AND DICKENS

Certain autobiographical elements have been perceived in Great Expectations which suggest that the novel is an imaginative recapitulation of Dickens's own quest for identity and that it presents the resolution of certain problems in his own life. In the article, "The Autobiographical Matrix of Great Expectations," Ada Nisbet writes that a close reading of biographical material suggests that Dickens's probing of Pip's soul "records Dickens' conscious and unconscious probing of his own soul to a degree not approximated in his other works."<sup>14</sup> Freudian critics, like Edmund Wilson, say that the problems which Dickens explores in his novels parallel certain problems which began in Dickens's childhood.<sup>15</sup> Wilson points to the two main traumatic experiences of Dickens's childhood: Dickens's employment in a dismal blacking warehouse in London during his family's impoverishment when Dickens was a boy of twelve, and the imprisonment for debt of Dickens's father in the Marshalsea at the same time.<sup>16</sup> Throughout his life, Dickens was acutely conscious of the shame and humiliation which these events caused him in childhood. Only as a middle-aged man did he have the courage to confess the agony which he experienced in childhood. In an autobiographical fragment incorporated in his novel David Copperfield, he described the anguish caused by his sense of the degrading nature of his warehouse employment and by his sense of working with socially inferior companions:

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship; compared these everyday associates with those of my happier



childhood; and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more; cannot be written. My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man; and wander desolately back to that time of my life.<sup>17</sup>

This autobiographical fragment was transmuted into the following passage in David Copperfield:

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship; compared these henceforth everyday associates with those of my happier childhood—not to say with Steerforth, Traddles, and the rest of the boys; and felt my hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my bosom. The deep remembrance of the sense I had, of being utterly without hope now; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that day by day what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and emulation up by, would pass away from me, little by little, never to be brought back any more; cannot be written. As often as Mick Waller went away in the course of that forenoon, I mingled my tears with the water in which I was washing the bottles; and sobbed as if there was a flaw in my own breast, and it were in danger of bursting (155).

These passages show a self-pity and a sense of injustice which resemble Pip's sense of self-pity and injustice. They also reveal that the young Dickens, like Pip, believed that his contact with socially inferior people would frustrate his "great expectations."

Dickens hid the fact of his humiliating warehouse employment from his friends and family for years. Only in the detachment of fiction in the quasi-autobiographical novel, David Copperfield, did Dickens find the courage to examine these experiences. In describing the autobiographical elements in David Copperfield, Edgar Johnson writes:

In all these intermingled strands of fact and fantasy, the shining memory of early childhood, the nightmare reality of boyhood, the unrealized dreams of what might have been, the softening of some of the humiliations Dickens still felt too sick at heart to portray as they were, and the lurid



enhancement of griefs that had swelled too bitterly into misery to be remembered with literal accuracy, the sad distortions and the playful exaggerations, too, these pages of David Copperfield have one deep and undeniable significance. Often fictional as to the mere event, they are undeviatingly true to the emotional reality . . . . Their very elements of invention are truer than the fact, because they symbolize the emotional reality. In them, Dickens made a profound and tremendous effort to come to grips with himself, to evaluate the influences that had made him what he was, to understand himself and the meaning of his own experience. That is what gives its greatness to the entire earlier third of the book.<sup>18</sup>

Dickens was equally ashamed of the imprisonment of his grandiloquent and financially irresponsible father, whose debts had caused the family's move from Dickens's happy, childhood home at Chatham to their shabby London lodgings. When the family was in financial difficulties, Dickens became acquainted with the London pawnshops, where he sold the family's goods. He supported his family, which had joined his father in the debtor's prison, with the earnings from his job of pasting labels on bottles in the warehouse. Dickens's uncle, who owned the warehouse, made some attempt to separate the little "gent," as Dickens's autobiographical hero, David Copperfield, is called by his warehouse companions, from the other boys. However, the uncle's attempts to maintain the young Dickens's position of gentility did not persist. Although his employment lasted no more than four or five months, the young Dickens felt imprisoned and overwhelmed by despair. He attempted to hide the fact of his father's imprisonment and his own shabby lodgings from his warehouse companions. When Dickens became ill at his work and a warehouse friend, Bob Fagin, offered to escort Dickens to his home, instead of taking Fagin to the prison or to his own meager lodgings, Dickens directed him to an unknown house. There Dickens dismissed Fagin and, in a state of embarrassed confusion, rang the door-bell and asked for Fagin.

Dickens's shame was increased by his parents' social pretensions



to gentility which appear in the portrait of the Micawbers in David Copperfield. His resentment against his pretentious and irresponsible father continued into Dickens's adult life. About his father, he wrote: "For anything like the damnable shadow which this father of mine casts upon my face, there never was—except in a nightmare."<sup>19</sup> Dickens's father continued to embarrass him by trading upon his famous name, by accumulating debts, and by borrowing money from Dickens's friends and associates. About his mother who had desired that the young Dickens should continue his hated employment in the warehouse after his father had obtained his release from the prison, the adult Dickens later wrote: "I never afterwards forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back."<sup>20</sup> In an attempt to curb his parents' financial extravagances, Dickens once attempted to exile his parents in a house in a small town. He also continued to conceal the fact of his employment in the warehouse, and only after his death did his children learn about it. His sense of injustice and resentment against his parents for their neglect of him had been described by one critic who finds evidence for these feelings in the words of Redlaw, the hero of Dickens's story, The Haunted Man: "I am he, neglected in my youth and miserably poor, who strove and suffered, and still strove and suffered . . . No mother's self-denying love nor father's counsel aided me."<sup>21</sup> Edmund Wilson writes: "The work of Dickens's whole career was an attempt to digest these early shocks and hardships, to explain them to himself, to justify himself to himself in relation to them, to give an intelligible and tolerable picture of a world in which such things occur."<sup>22</sup> From these experiences, one may suggest that the young Dickens emerged with a



determination to achieve the secure, socially respectable status of a gentleman. Dickens's David Copperfield shows that he also was concerned unconsciously to regain the lost security of childhood. These experiences gave to Dickens a sense of self-pity, of injustice, and one may suggest a desire for revenge, directed at his parents and class-conscious society. This desire for revenge would seem to be paralleled by Pip's motivation to become a gentleman and to spite Estella. Edmund Wilson writes:

For the man of spirit whose childhood has been crushed by the cruelty of organized society, one of two attitudes is natural: that of the criminal or that of the rebel. Charles Dickens, in imagination, was to play the rôles of both, and to continue up to his death to put into them all that was most passionate in his feeling.<sup>23</sup>

In Oliver Twist and David Copperfield the child-heroes' adventures, which take them to London just as Dickens moved from Chatham to London in childhood, finally bring an escape from the harshness of their London experiences and a return to an idyllic dependence upon loving substitute parents and friends. In these two novels appear two major symbols which arose from Dickens's remembrance of childhood: the child and the prison. The figure of the helpless orphan child is a complex symbol, arising both from Dickens's concern with social injustice and from his own sense of neglect in childhood. The orphan child also may be the symbolic product of Dickens's imaginative attempt through fiction to understand himself and his childhood experiences. Manheim has analyzed David Copperfield as a typical mythological hero.<sup>24</sup> The significance of this hero for Dickens may lie in Jung's explanation of the symbolic child figure in literature: It is not so surprising that so many of the mythological saviors are child-gods. This agrees exactly with our experience of the psychology of the individual, which shows that the "child" paves the way for a future change of personality. In the individuation process, it anticipates the figure that comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements



in the personality. It is therefore a symbol which unites the opposites; a mediator, bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole . . . I have called this wholeness that transcends consciousness the 'self.' The goal of the individuation process is the synthesis of the self.<sup>25</sup>

Dickens's deliberate self-exploration begins in the autobiographical David Copperfield, about which he wrote: "An Author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world. . . ."<sup>26</sup>

In Great Expectations, with greater artistic detachment and skill, Dickens continues his self-probing and his attempt to reconstruct his past experiences to find his identity. As J. Hillis Miller says in his Jungian study of Dickens's novels, a work of art is "not the mere symptom or product of a preexistent psychological condition, but . . . the very means by which a writer apprehends and, in some measure, creates himself."<sup>27</sup>

In Great Expectations Dickens continues the self-exploration which he began in David Copperfield in terms of the hero's youthful self-delusion, and places the hero's final self-discovery in a Christian context. That Dickens possessed an essentially Christian view of fallen man redeemed by love is shown by his book The Life of Our Lord,<sup>28</sup> which he wrote for his children. The presence of the pervasive prison symbol in Little Dorrit suggests that he possessed the Christian view of man in the prison of the fallen world.

The recurrent prison image in Dickens's novels is particularly connected, as one might expect, with figures who serve as surrogate-fathers to the orphan child. In focusing upon the child's freedom from corruption from the atmosphere of the prison and sin in Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, and Little Dorrit, Dickens seems to be attempting imaginatively to maintain his own innocence and freedom from guilt, sin and crime. Along with this emphasis on the innocence of the child hero in these novels goes the hero's



eventual achievement of a gentleman's identity and of the lost or unknown emotional security of childhood. Oliver is rescued by the Maylies and the Brownlows and restored to an idyllic childhood, and David Copperfield is restored first to an idyllic childhood dependence upon his Aunt Betsey and finally to an idyllically happy life as a loved and successful novelist, whose emotional needs are satisfied by the motherly wife, Agnes. Only in Great Expectations does Dickens admit the inevitability of the child's fall from innocence, his contamination by and his share in the sins of the adult world. In Great Expectations, the sin of the adult world, symbolized by the criminal Magwitch, and the world of the child, presented through Pip, converge. On a biographical level, in Great Expectations Dickens seems to admit in Pip's story his own implication in fallen human nature. The guilt and sins of the young Pip, which the older Pip must face, are central to the novel. Pip learns that the new self or his identity as a gentleman does not bring innocence or freedom from the taint of crime and sin. He discovers that his gentleman's identity has been created by the criminal Magwitch, who refers to himself as Pip's second father. Pip's resolution of identity in the prison of the fallen world is developed primarily in his relationships with the parent-figures, Joe and Magwitch. Joe, whom Pip calls a "gentle Christian man" represents Dickens's mature vision of the true gentleman. Before Magwitch returns to England, Pip discovers that his identity as a gentleman living a life of dissipation and extravagance brings him only a sense of discontent.

In Great Expectations Dickens may have probed his own feeling of discontent after his successful achievement, like David Copperfield's



of social respectability, wealth and security. In 1854 Dickens expressed this sense of discontent: "Whatever it is, it is always driving me, and I cannot help it. I have rested nine or ten weeks and sometimes feel as if it had been a year—though I had the strangest nervous miseries before I stopped."<sup>29</sup> Great Expectations was published as a complete novel in 1861. In this novel, Dickens appears to have retraced the emotional events of his life in fictional form and looked for the reasons for his discontent, and to have examined, in particular, his childhood and adolescent relationships with his parents and his own sense of injustice. In the novels which precede Great Expectations, the child is the victim of parental injustice, and tyrannical or weak parents are punished. In David Copperfield the tyrannical Mr. Murdstone disappears into the novel's background and the cruel Miss Murdstone is defeated by David's Aunt Betsy. In Little Dorrit Amy Dorrit's pompous, improvident father, who like Dickens's own father was a Marshalsea prisoner, suffers a humiliating "come-uppance" in the novel's denouement. Clennam's fierce and cruel mother is paralyzed at the end of the novel by a stroke which is inferred to be an act of God. However, in Great Expectations, both the child and tyrannical parent-figures are punished, and the hero learns to recognize the exaggeration of his sense of injustice in relation to the parent-figures.

The autobiographical parallels in Great Expectations which suggest Dickens's probing of his life are, as Harry Stone says, both "direct and emblematic."<sup>30</sup> Pip, like Dickens, came from lowly origins, felt himself an outcast, yearned to rise, attained wealth, entered polite society, failed to find happiness, and all the while hid what he considered



his shaming taint: the formative episode of his childhood."<sup>31</sup> Pip's shaming taint is his connection with the prisoner Magwitch in his childhood. Magwitch becomes Pip's "second father." The young Pip's abhorrence of Magwitch parallels Dickens's abhorrence of his father's imprisonment. Stone argues that

Magwitch, in many ways is the personification of that taint, and Pip's self-deluding desire to run from Magwitch when the convict has returned from exile is similar to Dickens' own attempts to run from his past. Pip's salvation through Magwitch then becomes Dickens' mature recognition expressed more than once elsewhere—that his great gift was partially created and permanently shaped by the childhood experience he sought to disown.<sup>32</sup>

Dickens now splits the emotional weight of his traumatic childhood experiences in London. The blacking warehouse is mentioned obliquely when Joe, one of Pip's father-surrogates, visits one. As Stone continues:

Pip is formed by the two regions, which moulded Dickens—Chatham and London . . . . In Great Expectations, the blacking warehouse becomes the blacksmith's forge, and Pip upon his apprenticeship to Joe feels the same sense of imprisonment that Dickens felt when his family went to prison, and he was contracted to the warehouse. That sense of imprisonment is intimately associated with shame and unworthiness, even with sinfulness and criminality. Dickens' hidden blacking-warehouse initiation into prison and dark experiences is psychologically analogous, therefore, to Pip's hidden tainting by crime and criminals. But for Pip as for Dickens the past will not remain hidden; it constantly reaches into the present and trammels his everyday life.<sup>33</sup>

The blacksmith, Joe, may be regarded as the embodiment of the humble origins of Dickens's own father.<sup>34</sup> As Ada Nisbet suggests, "Dickens' feelings about his father may be the particular well-spring of Pip's struggle with his old loyalties and ambitions, as we see Pip devoted to Joe Gargery, then ashamed of him, and then ashamed of being ashamed."<sup>35</sup> Pip's sense of injustice at his treatment by Mrs. Joe, who keeps his earnings, parallels Dickens's sense of injustice at his treatment by his



mother, who attempted to keep him as a drudge and main source of the family income in the blacking warehouse.

Pip's journey to London parallels Dickens's journey to London from the Chatham district as a boy of twelve. This journey is the recurrent quest in which Dickens's child heroes are initiated into harsh reality and the world of crime. Unlike Pip, however, David Copperfield and Oliver Twist retain their innocence and spiritual purity.

In Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Little Dorrit, Dickens presents tyrannical, foolish or prodigal surrogate-fathers. Tyrannical fathers appear as Fagin in Oliver Twist and Murdstone in David Copperfield. Foolish and prodigal father-figures appear as Mr. Dick and Micawber in David Copperfield. Mr. Dorrit is both a prodigal and foolish father. In Great Expectations, the innocent hero is transformed into a guilty, ungrateful prodigal son and the "foolish" father, Joe, is shown to be the real hero of the novel. Pip's "prodigal" father, Magwitch, becomes heroic in his dignity. The tyrannical guardian, Jaggers, who may be said to be another father-surrogate, is shown to be a compassionate and limited human being. In Pip's final relationship with Joe and Magwitch, Dickens seems to reveal his awareness of his own former ingratitude to and unjust resentment of his father.

In Great Expectations, as Edgar Johnson and others have suggested, Dickens also seems to be probing his relationships with women. As a young man, Dickens was fascinated by the young Maria Beadnell. He was heart-broken when she rejected him, and within a few



years he married Catherine Hogarth. Dickens became unhappy with Catherine, whom he regarded as inefficient and unable to be a strong and mature wife. His unhappiness with Catherine, which seems to be portrayed in David Copperfield's unhappy marriage to his wife, became the subject of public scandal when Dickens published a newspaper defense of his separation from her. At that time, Dickens fell in love with the young actress, Ellen Ternan and described his love for Ellen in terms which parallel Pip's description of his love for Estella. Dickens said:

I am the modern embodiment of the old Enchanters, whose Familiars tore them to pieces. I weary of rest and have no satisfaction but in fatigue. Realities and idealities are always comparing themselves before me, and then I don't like the Realities except when they are unattainable—then I like them of all things. I wish I had been born in the days of Ogres and Dragon-guarded Castles. I wish an Ogre with seven heads . . . had taken the Princess whom I adore—you have no idea of how intensely I love her!—to his stronghold on the top of a high series of mountains, and there tied her by the hair. Nothing would suit me half so well as climbing after her, sword in hand and either winning her or being killed.—There's a frame of mind for you.<sup>36</sup>

This statement parallels Pip's description of his love for Estella, and his delusion about Miss Havisham's plans for him to marry Estella:

She had adopted Estella, she had as good as adopted me, and it could not fail to be her intention to bring us together. She reserved it for me to restore the desolate house, admit the sunshine to the dark rooms, set the clocks a going and the cold hearths a blazing, tear down the cobwebs, destroy the vermin—in short, do all the shining deeds of the young Knight of romance and marry the Princess. I had stopped to look at the house as I passed; and its seared red brick walls, blocked windows, and strong green ivy clasping even the stacks of chimneys with its twigs and tendons, as if with sinewy old arms, had made up a rich attractive mystery, of which I was the hero (219).

Great Expectations seems to give evidence that, if Pip is an autobiographical, fictional counterpart of Dickens, Dickens realized that romantic love could not resolve the sense of discontent which he felt and which he formerly, in David Copperfield, related to romantic love.



David says:

The old unhappy feeling pervaded my life. It was deepened if it were changed at all; but it was as undecided as ever, and addressed me like a strain of sorrowful music faintly heard in the night. I loved my wife dearly, and I was happy; but the happiness I had vaguely anticipated, once, was not the happiness I enjoyed and there was always something wanting (697).

In 1855 the same equation of unhappiness with romantic love seems to be suggested in one of Dickens's letters to Forster. To Forster, he wrote: "Why is it, that as with poor David, a sense always crushing on me now, when I fall into low spirits, as if one happiness I had missed in life, and one friend and companion I have never made."<sup>37</sup> Clearly, the stage was set for Ellen Ternan to appear, but despite his middle-aged despairs, Dickens could not envisage in the still idealistic David Copperfield such a bleak solution as was later to come. In David Copperfield the unhappy writer's wife miraculously dies and is replaced by an ideal wife. In Great Expectations Dickens seems to show that his expectation of resolving his discontent in romantic love and of finding secure happiness in romantic love is unrealistic. Although still involved with Ellen during the writing of Great Expectations, Dickens seems to show in Pip's story that he has recognized the self-delusion and imaginative fantasies, mixed with the love of a mature man, which he had woven about the figure of Ellen. Pip's resolution of his discontent with himself primarily involves his relationship with Magwitch and Joe, his father-figures. Perhaps Dickens, too, realized that the source of his unhappiness and discontent lay in the guilt which he felt for his unjust resentment towards his father, who had threatened his social respectability and desire for a new self, and in the falseness of his "expectations" of such a self. Without the help of a psychoanalyst, Dickens seems to reveal in Pip's story his realization



that his discontent lay in his relationship with his father, and in his false expectation of the resolution of his happiness and identity in terms of romantic love.



### III

#### PIP AND SOCIETY

The symbolic landscape, detail and action of the opening scene of Great Expectations foreshadow the events of the story, and present Dickens's vision of man's condition in a fallen world. In this scene, the child, Pip, first discerns the "identity of things" (1), the nature of the world and of himself. Pip perceives that life is a battle as he contemplates the tombstones of his five dead brothers, who gave up "trying to get a living exceedingly early in that universal struggle" (1). As the wind blows coldly from its "savage lair" (1), he senses the mysterious hostility of nature and of the world to man. In the churchyard overgrown with nettles on the cold, misty marshes, Pip becomes aware of himself: that "the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all, and beginning to cry, was Pip" (1). The image of the churchyard presents a picture of ruin developed by the other symbolic images and settings throughout the book. The ruin and corruption of man's world is conveyed by the grime of London streets, the decaying London buildings, and the ruined garden of Satis House. As in Little Dorrit, the pervasive taint of crime and prison dominates the novel and is foreshadowed in Pip's meeting with the convict on the marshes, and in the ominous images of the gibbet and the unhooped cask in the opening scene. Another pervasive symbol of the decay of man's world is the image of mud, which appears in London streets, along the riverbank in Pip's river voyage with Magwitch, and in the ooze of the marshes from which Orlick ominously rises. The world in Great



Expectations is tainted and polluted with social crime.

The pollution of the fallen world arises from the sin of man in society, reversing the order of creation by taking justice into his own hands, and by dehumanizing or spiritually murdering individuals. Social crime against the individual, and individual reactions against society dominate the book. The fact that one of the central characters, Magwitch, is called Abel, and is a victim of social injustice, serves to underline this theme. Pip's involvement in the crimes of society against the individual will be explored in this chapter and set in relation to Pip's accommodation to society.

The child's recognition of his own identity in the opening scene is accompanied by his confrontation with Magwitch, bringing an immediate involvement in social crime. Describing the importance of the child's recognition of his own identity with this simultaneous involvement with the convict, Van Ghent says that

. . . every child, whatever his innocence, inherits guilt (as the potential of his acts) for the condition of man. The inversion of natural order begins here with the first self-consciousness: the child is heir to the sins of "the fathers." Thus the crime that is always pervasive in Dickens is identified in a new way not primarily as that of the "father," nor as that of some public institution, but as that of the child, the original individual who must necessarily take upon himself responsibility for not only what is to be done in the present and the future, but what has been done in the past, inasmuch as the past is part and parcel of the present and the future. The child is the criminal, and it is for this reason that he is able to redeem his world; for the world's guilt is his guilt and he can expiate it in his own acts.<sup>38</sup>

Essentially too, as Stone claims, Great Expectations is "translated by allusion, imagery and parallelism into an archetypal, quasi-Christian retelling of man's innocence, fall, harrowing, and redemption."<sup>39</sup> The characters who "contribute in multiple ways to the novel's meaning"<sup>40</sup> symbolically present various spiritual states of mind which are juxta-



posed to aspects of Pip's spiritual development. Pip's initial encounter with Magwitch when Pip first becomes self-conscious is a symbolic initiation of Pip's fall from innocence and involvement in the guilt of society and mankind. Van Ghent says that "Pip carries the convict inside him as the negative potential of his 'great expectations' Magwitch is the concretion of his potential guilt."<sup>41</sup> Stone writes: ". . . for though Magwitch is a society-produced, society corrupting individual who infects everything he touches, he is also a lawless fragment of Pip's self and Pip must recognize this before he can absolve himself . . . ."<sup>42</sup> Magwitch, as Stone points out, has the role both of Pip's corruptor and saviour.

Pip experiences guilt for his crime of stealing food and a file from his home for the convict. This crime leads on to his later denial of human worth and individuality in his snobbery towards the blacksmith, Joe, and in his abhorrence for the convict, who reappears when Pip is a young man. Pip is also guilty of implication in the murder of Mrs. Joe when he unwittingly and indirectly supplies the murderer, Orlick, with the convict's leg-iron, the instrument which kills Mrs. Joe. Pip's greatest crime lies in his desire to become the kind of gentleman who joins a class-conscious society, persecuting individuals like the outcast, Magwitch. Compeyson, with his affected gentility, can be seen almost as a parody of Pip's great desire.

Pip's crime of ignoring the worth of individuals and, in a sense, contributing to their dehumanization and their spiritual murder, is the crime of his society towards individuals. As Van Ghent says: "'The crime,' in Dickens, is evidently a permutation of multiple



motivations and acts, both public and private, but always with the same tendency to convert people into things. . . ."43 Pip comes to share this crime in his attitude to Estella, who represents to him an object to be possessed and an abstract ideal.

The society in which Pip finds himself is a society ridden by moral disease. The title of the novel, Great Expectations, may be said to be an ironic comment on Victorian society, beset with the notion of materialistic progress but being slowly destroyed by moral and spiritual decay. Matthew Arnold, (in his anecdote of "a Mr. Smith, secretary to some insurance company, who, it was said, 'laboured under the apprehension that he would come to poverty, and that he was eternally lost.'") and several scholars following him, have observed as a characteristic moral ambiguity of Victorian life the confusion of moral or religious values and materialistic ones.<sup>44</sup> Victorian society had reversed the order of creation in its manipulation of individuals and its dehumanization of people. As Miller says: "The central motif of Great Expectations, the donnée with which Dickens began, was the secret manipulation of Pip's life by the convict, Magwitch, a striking idea going to the roots of nineteenth century concepts about human existence."<sup>45</sup> People in society were becoming fragmented and separated from each other. The hostility of the world to man was reflected in the hostility and impersonal cruelty of society to individuals. Although the book is set in an earlier time than that of the great materialistic surge of Victorian society, what Dickens is expressing in the novel is relevant to his own time and has been incorporated into his vision of Pip's society: Dickens lived in a time and an environment in which a full-scale demolition of traditional values was going on, correlatively with the uprooting and dehumanization of men, women, and children by the millions, a process brought about by industrialization, colonial imperialism, and the exploitation of the human being as a 'thing' or an engine or part of an



P engine capable of being used for profit.<sup>46</sup> When Pip is undergoing his final understanding of himself in relation to society, he experiences a vision of himself as "a steel beam of a vast engine, clashing and whirling over a gulf" (438). He begs that the engine be stopped, and that his part in it be hammered off. Van Ghent continues her comment upon the machinery of manipulation and de-humanization in Victorian society:

Dickens' intuition alarmingly saw this process in motion, a process which abrogated the primary demands of feeling and rationality, and he sought an extraordinary explanation of it. People were becoming things, and things (the things money can buy or that are the means for making money or for exalting prestige in the abstract) were becoming more important than people. People were being de-animated, robbed of their souls, and things were usurping the prerogatives of animate creatures, governing the lives of their owners in the most literal sense.<sup>47</sup>

The portrait of Victorian society is most clearly presented in Dickens's portrayal of Satis House and its upper middle-class, materialistic owner, Miss Havisham. As Miller says: "Miss Havisham's house of darkness, decay, and frozen time is a symbol of the upper class, paralyzed in its codified mores and prejudices as much as it is a symbol of the spiritual condition of Miss Havisham."<sup>48</sup> In the picture of Satis House, the name of which means "enough" and which points ironically to the creed of materialistic, Victorian society, the reader sees the reversed order of creation and the usurping of human value by things. Miss Havisham uses her wealth, which brought her own ruin in attracting Compeyson to her, to ruin and dehumanize other people. She embellishes Estella with her jewels and encourages Pip to equate her with them. For Pip this encouragement becomes a symbolic suggestion of buying her or of possessing her. Miss Havisham's



conception of human relationships is that of use and manipulation, and she encourages Estella to use Pip. To Pip, she says: "How does she use you, Pip, how does she use you?" (288) The vision of society which appears in Great Expectations in accordance with the idea of manipulation of other people is the vision of a society, structured by relationships of oppressor and oppressed, of master and slave, and of class-consciousness and greed. It is not pure chance that the game which the child, Pip, plays with Estella is "beggar my neighbor" (55). Wemmick expounds the Victorian money ethic and emphasis on "things" when he advises Pip to get "portable property" (190). The predatory nature of society, which feeds upon and manipulates people, extends from Miss Havisham's parasitic relatives who wait for her death to the parasitic dock-laborer or Jack who fishes dead bodies from the Thames and wears the clothes of those dead men.

Pip encounters various levels of society during his growth from childhood to maturity. He is involved in village society in his childhood with his sister and Joe. He encounters middle-class society in his childhood visits to Miss Havisham and his adolescent visits to the Pockets. He is involved with criminal society when he is supervised during his youth and early maturity by the criminal lawyer, Jaggers. In all of these social levels, he is exposed to the values and traits of Victorian society. In village society, he is made aware of class-consciousness by his sister, who says: "It's bad enough to be a blacksmith's wife (and him a Gargery), without being your mother" (7). The value of property is made apparent to Pip



in his sister's behavior:

We walked to town, my sister leading the way in a very large beaver bonnet, and carrying like the Great Seal of England in plaited straw, a pair of pattens, a spare shawl, and an umbrella, though it was a fine bright day. I am not quite clear whether these articles were carried penitentially or ostentatiously; but I rather think they were displayed as articles of property—much as Cleopatra or any other sovereign lady on the Rampage might exhibit her wealth in a pageant or a procession (93).

Pip experiences the fate of the individual in society as the oppressed victim of his sister, "given to government" (44), and as the object of scorn of her friends, Wopsle and Pumblechook. Within this village society, possessing the traits of Victorian society, Pip conceives a sense of injustice and alienation. He says: "I was always treated as if I had insisted on being born in opposition to the dictates of reason, religion, and morality, and against the dissuading arguments of my best friends" (20). He is "used" both as a "connubial missile" (7) in Mrs. Joe's domestic disputes and as a convenient scapegoat for Pumblechook's sermons. Pip represents, by his visits to Miss Havisham, a source of prestige to his class-conscious sister and her friends. Pip develops resentment against this society in which he is treated like an outcast and an object. When Mr. Wopsle directs his sermon on ingratitude at Pip at the Christmas dinner, Pip expresses his resentment: "Anyhow Mr. Wopsle's nose so aggravated me, during the recital of my misdemeanours, that I should have liked to pull it until he howled" (24).

Pip's initiation into middle-class society begins with his visits to Miss Havisham and Estella, who deliberately make him ashamed of his social class and manners. His desire to become a gentleman arises from these visits in which he becomes infatuated with Estella, who represents wealth and superior position, admired by his sister. Pip's battle with



"the pale young gentleman," (84), Herbert, represents one way of asserting himself in this middle-class society and shows that Pip is capable of violence. The older narrator suggests that he felt a great sense of guilt for his violence against Herbert: "Indeed, I go so far as to hope that I regarded myself while dressing, as a species of savage young wolf, or other wild beast" (86).

The question which the individual who feels a sense of injustice and alienation from his society must solve is how to find freedom, security and identity within society. As Miller says: "The single great development in Dickens' world view is the change in the kinds of expedients which are deemed proper or possible. Great Expectations is the novel in which the various alternatives are most clearly presented and opposed."<sup>49</sup>

Pip's initial choice of a way of resolving his relationship to society is the natural result of the conditions which he has observed in society. His passive way of adjusting to class-conscious society is to wish to become a gentleman of property and to be removed without aggression or guilt from his sphere of life. He seeks an identity which is the socially respectable self of his dreams. For Pip this identity becomes the means of winning Estella and of satisfying his sense of injustice and alienation from society.

An element of revenge exists in this solution, as Biddy suggests to him when she asks Pip if he wishes to become a gentleman to win Estella or to spite her. By paralleling Pip's attempt to resolve his identity with Miss Havisham's and Magwitch's attempts, Dickens shows that this motive of revenge and this way of finding an



identity are undesirable. Miss Havisham seeks to preserve the self which was a jilted bride by stopping the clocks in her house and mourning her betrayal. However, she seeks an identity for herself through Estella and revenge upon all men by raising Estella as a hard-hearted siren and snobbish young lady. Magwitch seeks an identity for himself and revenge against society, which has punished him for the crimes of the false gentleman, Compeyson, by making Pip into a gentleman. Both Magwitch and Miss Havisham initially fail to see that love, and an understanding heart, are qualities which make a person truly gentle. Magwitch and Miss Havisham are guilty of the crime of trying to own other people. Their manipulation of other people to satisfy their sense of injustice is shown to be a false resolution to their own problems and adjustment to society.

Once he has passively acquired his new identity as a gentleman, Pip also shares their sin of manipulation and disregard for individuals when he conceives the desire to remove "Joe to a higher sphere" (141). Pip seems to share the desire to manipulate and control people when he hires the serving boy whom he names the "Avenger." Although Pip's relationship with the Avenger is more comic than oppressive, it may be seen as a comic parody of his own childhood servility to Mrs. Joe. The crime of oppressor against the oppressed and of master against slave, an aspect of society's manipulation of people, is developed in terms of the image of Frankenstein. When Magwitch confronts Pip, Pip compares the situation to Frankenstein's pursuit by the monster which he had created. "The imaginary student pursued by the misshapen creature he had impiously made was not more wretched than I, pursued by the



creature who had made me, and recoiling from him with a stronger repulsion the more he admired me and fonder he was of me" (320). Ironically, Pip's later development includes the realization of his own monstrous conduct to Joe.

Besides overt aggression, displayed by Orlick, Pip has two alternatives for resolving his problems of relationship to society. The first alternative which Pip adopts in maturity is the acceptance, exemplified by Joe, of the existence of class divisions in society and of one's allotted social position. The second alternative is displayed by Jaggers and Wemmick. They accept superficially the materialism and injustice of society, and they dominate their inferiors and criminal clients. But each maintains a private life and personal identity which are hidden from society. Wemmick passes his free time in caring for his father at his Walworth castle, and he finds his identity as the lord of his manor and as a faithful son. Jaggers finds a personal identity in his role of benefactor to Magwitch's wife and to Estella, Magwitch's daughter. Both show Pip the limitations of society and a way of adjusting to them. Jagger's legal procedure and cross-examining manner help to reveal to Pip the limitation of society's justice and of human knowledge. Pip initially fails to take the advice of Jaggers, who predicts that he will go astray in his gentleman's role and whose rule of life appears in his statement: "Take nothing on its looks; take everything on evidence" (317). Pip fails to discover the connection between his early contact with crime in his childhood encounter with Magwitch and his involvement with Jaggers' criminal world in Little Britain. Before Magwitch returns to England, Pip thinks:



. . . how strange it was I should be encompassed by all this taint of prison and crime; that in my childhood out on our lonely marshes on a winter evening I should have first encountered it; that, it should have reappeared on two occasions, starting out like a stain that was faded but had not gone. . . . I beat the prison dust off my feet as I sauntered to and fro, and I shook it out of my dress, and I exhaled its air from my lungs. So contaminated did I feel . . . . (249-250).

As Van Ghent says about this speculation, Pip begins ". . . dimly to be aware of his implication in the guilt for which the establishment stands, for his 'great expectations' have already begun to make him a collaborator in the generic crime of using people as a means to personal ends."<sup>50</sup>

Following Magwitch's return to England, the turning point of Pip's attitude to society and to the product of society's injustice, Magwitch, comes in his voyage on the Thames with the convict. On this voyage Pip assumes the burden of social responsibility for the outcast, Magwitch, and his own share in society's crime against him. Pip, like Cain, discovers that he is his brother's keeper. Pip's original expectations have been shipwrecked with Magwitch's return, and this voyage is part of a new quest for forgiveness. When Pip had encountered Magwitch in his London lodgings, he had shrunk from Magwitch's touch as "if he had been a snake" (305). After their capture by the authorities on the river Pip holds Magwitch's hand and the bond of their mutual identity, strengthened by their feelings of being outcasts in society and foreshadowed in the novel's opening scene, is confirmed:

. . . when I took my place by Magwitch's side, I felt that that was my place henceforth while he lived.

For now my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted wounded shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously, towards me with greater constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe (423).



This voyage is part of Pip's spiritual journey through crime, redemption and atonement. Pip's trial or ordeal with Magwitch on the river has been preceded by what Harry Stone calls Pip's trial by fire.<sup>51</sup> Orlick, who hates Pip for crushing his own expectations of a career as a gate-keeper at Satis House and for interfering with his interest in Biddy, lures Pip to the lime-kiln on the marshes with the intention of killing him. Symbolically Orlick represents a spiritual excess of hate and revenge, and his aggressive actions represent an alternative way of asserting identity in society. As Stone points out, Orlick is both symbolically Satan and one of Pip's alter-egos. His Satanic significance is foreshadowed in the early scene in the novel when he intimidates Pip: "When I was very small and timid, he gave me to understand that the Devil lived in a black corner of the forge and that he knew the fiend very well; also that it was necessary to make up the fire, once in seven years with a live boy, and that I might consider myself fuel" (105). Moynahan has described the parallels between Pip and Orlick which show that Orlick may be considered as Pip's alter-ego.<sup>52</sup> Pip's journey to Orlick's sluice-house on the marshes symbolically invokes a passage to Hell:

Pip's journey to this lair—simultaneously a journey to the underworld and encounter with the devil—is introduced by foreboding symbolism. The marshes, the sky, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the distant lights, the hulks, the old Battery, the wind—all recall the opening scenes of the novel, but now each detail is made to prefigure Pip's fateful return to his sources, his climatic confrontation with evil and himself . . . . The . . . vapor of the kiln envelops the gatekeeper's house and engulfs Pip in the very reek of hell.<sup>53</sup>

Orlick calls Pip a "wolf," the very name which Pip applied to himself after his childhood battle with the pale young gentleman, Herbert: 'Wolf,' said he, folding his arms again, 'Old Orlick's a going to tell



you somethink. It was you as did for your shrew sister.'

' . . . 'It was you, villain,' said I.

'I tell you it was your doing I tell you it was done through you,' he retorted, catching up the gun, and making a blow with the stock at the vacant air between us. 'I come upon her from behind, as I come upon you to-night. I giv' it her! I left her for dead, and if there had been a limekiln as nigh her as there is now nigh you, she shouldn't have come to life again. But it warn't Old Orlick as did it; it was you. You was favoured, and he was bullied and beat. Old Orlick bullied and beat, eh? Now you pays for it. You done it; now you pays for it! (404-405).

As Stone says: "Pip pays for his remote complicity . . . in his sister's death just as he pays for every atom of sin that touches his life. But his very human sinning is merged with its opposites; his sinning and its chastening consequences help him toward redemption, and out of the inextricable web of good and evil . . . he slowly fashions his own salvation."<sup>54</sup> Pip is purged symbolically by fire in the heat of the candle which Orlick holds up to his face. Just as the guilt which Pip inherits as his share in the human condition and society's crimes is mysterious, so his trial by fire, purgation and redemption is equally mysterious and presented symbolically. His ordeal with Orlick which precedes his voyage down the Thames with Magwitch and which leaves him in an excited state of mind, is only the first part of Pip's purgation.

Their voyage on the river represents Pip's passage to a "new" identity. After Magwitch has been captured by the authorities and charged with the murder of Compeyson, he undergoes a trial. In this prison trial, Pip holds Magwitch's hand while the sentence of death is pronounced upon the convict and thirty-two other prisoners. As in Little Dorrit, the image of sunlight, which slants across the prison court, unites all men as sinners who will be judged finally



by God. The only perfect justice is God's justice before which all men are equal:

The sun was striking in at the great windows of the court, through the glittering drops of rain upon the glass, and it made a broad shaft of light between the two-and-thirty, and the Judge, linking both together, and perhaps reminding some among the audience, how both were passing on, with absolute equality, to the greater Judgment that knowth all things and cannot err (434).

Pip's acceptance of his "new" identity as a sinner, which he shares with Magwitch and all men, is expressed in his thoughts at Magwitch's deathbed: "Mindful, then, of what we read together, I thought of the two men who went up into the Temple to pray, and I knew there were no better words that I could say beside his bed, than 'O Lord, be merciful to him a sinner!'" (436) Pip's new sense of self, acquired in his identification with Magwitch, is confirmed before Magwitch dies in Pip's confession that he loves Estella, Magwitch's daughter, and that he thus owes everything to the convict whom he had once abhorred.

Pip's final trial by fire occurs during his feverish delirium, in which the symbolic vapor of the limekiln reappears. He seems to be in a "closed iron furnace" (437). Pip's disengagement from the mechanistic values of Victorian society seems to be represented in his feelings of being "a brick in a house wall" (438) and a "steel beam of a vast engine, clashing and whirling over a gulf" (438). Pip wishes to be released from the engine. In this symbolic illness, Pip discards his identity as a gentleman and reawakens in the arms of the loving Joe under whose care he "was like a little child" (442). Symbolically, Pip has been reborn with a "new" identity which ironically is the old identity of his childhood days before he aspired to gentility. His name of "Pip Pirrip" symbolically underlines this return to his old



self. When the letters of his name are reversed, they still spell "Pip Pirrip." Despite the changes and reversals in his fortune, Pip remains the same Pip, purged of his sense of injustice, and of his desires for revenge and social respectability. Pip's realization of Joe's worth and the falseness of his old conception of a "gentleman" is expressed in his penitential whisper: "O God bless him! O God bless this gentle Christian man!" (439) In Joe who cares for him with tact and kindness, Pip appears to recognize the true gentleman, redefined as a "gentle Christian man." Pip's rebirth occurs in May in accordance with Dickens's symbolic use of seasons in the novel. Pip's initiation into evil, which accompanied the birth of self-consciousness, had occurred at Christmas, and Magwitch's trial and death, which accompanies Pip's own trial by fire and rebirth, occurs around the season of Easter.

Pip desires to withdraw from middle-class society and to return to Biddy and the forge like a "forgiven child" (447). However, Dickens's vision of the price of the hero's guilt and atonement has enlarged in this novel. Unlike David Copperfield and Clennam, his hero is no longer permitted the reward of an ideal, motherly wife. Unlike David, Pip cannot find his final identity in dependence upon other people. When Pip returns to the village to adopt his former social identity as a blacksmith's helper and to marry Biddy, he finds that Joe has married Biddy. A suggestion of a patronizing tone in Pip's farewell to Biddy and Joe, expressed in the words of the Anglican communion service, shows that Pip needs to learn further humility: And Joe and Biddy both, as you have been to church today and are in charity and love with all mankind, receive my humble thanks for all



you have done for me, and all I have so ill repaid. And when I say that I am going away within the hour, for I am soon going abroad, and that I shall never rest until I have worked for the money with which you have kept me out of prison, and have sent it to you, don't think, dear Joe and Biddy, that if I could repay it a thousand times over, I suppose that I could cancel a farthing of the debt I owe you, or that I would do so if I could! (454)

Magwitch's and Joe's love have helped to redeem Pip but he still is required to make his own way in the world as a mature man with the knowledge of his imperfections and past guilt. The final stage of Pip's resolution of identity in society requires a period of exile from English society in his position as a humble clerk in Herbert's firm.

When Pip returns to his village society after his exile and success through hard work in Herbert's firm, he takes Joe's son, the young Pip, to the churchyard and sets him on the tombstone on which Magwitch had placed him in his childhood. This symbolic re-enactment of the novel's opening scene may serve as Pip's realization that the second young Pip also must experience, in some way, the same involvement in the guilt of society in his growth to maturity. In the ruined garden of Satis House, Pip finds Estella, whose experiences have removed her wealth and softened her. United by their recognition of their imperfections, like Adam and Eve, Pip and Estella wander out of the ruined garden to take their place in society in a fallen world.



## IV

### PIP AND HIS "PARENTS"

Pip's realization of his identity as a sinner in the fallen world is an integral part of his identity as a prodigal son. Van Ghent writes: "The child-parent situation has been disnatured, corrupted, with the rest of nature; or rather, since the child-parent situation is the dynamic core of the Dickens world, the radical disnaturung here is what has corrupted the rest."<sup>55</sup> As Van Ghent suggests, in Great Expectations social crime and the crime of parents and children against one another are inherent in each other. They are also "formally analogous, their form being the treatment of persons as things."<sup>56</sup>

In the earlier novels, discussed in this thesis, the crimes of the parent-child relationship are those only of parents or parent-surrogates against children and particularly against the orphan hero. Parent-figures who abuse the hero are punished in the novels' denouements and new, ideal parent-surrogates are found by the hero. In Great Expectations one sees for the first time the hero's sins against parent-figures in addition to the sins of parents against children. The child Pip's psychological guilt becomes spiritually concrete when the young Pip, as Van Ghent says, "conceives the tainted wish—the wish to be like the most powerful adult and to treat others as things."<sup>57</sup> The hero must be reconciled with the parent-surrogates who have abused him and with the parent-surrogates whom he has abused. Pip learns to understand the feelings of his parent-surrogates, to see them as ordinary human beings



who are worthy of respect and love, and to accept his share of responsibility for his relationship with them.

The most important parent-child relationship in Great Expectations appears to be the relationship between the father-figures and the hero. In the earlier novels, some aspect of a father's life or character determines in some way the suffering of the hero in his quest for identity.<sup>58</sup> The conditions of the Will of Oliver Twist's dead father lead to Fagin's attempts to corrupt Oliver and to Oliver's subsequent sufferings. The fact of his dead father's illicit love for his dead mother has led to Oliver's birth and initial misery in the poorhouse. David Copperfield's suffering, which arises from his blindness to the unsuitability of his marriage, seems to be blamed upon the fact that he has inherited an impracticality and blindness from his dead father, whose absence in David's childhood has led indirectly to David's sufferings. A sense of blame, based upon the lack of a father, appears in words of David's alter-ego, Steerforth, who blames his dissolute life upon the lack of a father's guidance: "David, I wish to God I had had a judicious father these last twenty years! . . . I wish with all my soul I had been better guided" (322). Again in Little Dorrit the hero's unhappiness in childhood has been caused by his step-mother's jealousy and vengeance, arising from her discovery of his dead father's illicit affair with Clennam's real mother. In Little Dorrit, and to a much greater extent in Great Expectations, the hero's suffering, caused in part by the action of a father-figure, is shown to include acceptance of his own responsibility for his suffering and destiny.



In the earlier novels, the hero's father-surrogates appear either as tyrannical, weak, prodigal or foolish. The father-figures may also show a combination of these qualities.<sup>59</sup> Oliver Twist's first father-surrogate is the foolish Bumble, the poorhouse beadle who is replaced by the tyrannical figure of Fagin. Oliver finally acquires an ideal father in the form of Mr. Brownlow. In David Copperfield, David escapes the supervision of his tyrannical step-father, Mr. Murdstone, and receives the parental advice of the weak or prodigal Micawber and the amiably foolish Mr. Dick. In Little Dorrit the prodigal, foolish and tyrannical traits of the father-figure are combined in the portrait of Mr. Dorrit, who is punished for these traits in the novel's denouement. Another father-figure, Patriarchal Casby, receives symbolic punishment for his hypocrisy in the denouement when his head is shaved. In Great Expectations the young self-deluded Pip sees a foolish father in Joe, his first father-surrogate. Pip is confronted by a helpless and prodigal father in the person of the returned convict, Magwitch. The tyrannical aspect of the father-figure appears initially in the fearsome Magwitch at the novel's beginning and later in the figure of Jaggers, who is Pip's guardian. Pip's final sense of identity is resolved primarily in terms of his relationships with these three father-surrogates. In the last stage of his development, Pip learns to reassess these father-figures. He discovers that the seemingly foolish and childlike Joe is a wise and adult man, and that the prodigal Magwitch whom he attempts to save is actually Pip's own saviour as well as being the source of his corruption. He also learns that the tyrannical Jaggers is an ordinary



man whose impersonal mask of power and omniscience hides compassion and limitations. In his relationships with these men, Pip begins to assess reality and to recognize the ambiguities, complexities and paradoxes of life. One may say that psychologically Magwitch, Jaggers and Joe represent a child's vision of his father as a savage threat, as law-giving king who astonishes with his power, and as a kindly protector and companion.<sup>60</sup> Pip learns from these father-surrogates and reaches a point in which he acquires his independence from them.

The image of the prodigal son who recognizes his sin of ingratitude, his youthful folly, and the value of his home, underlies the resolution of Pip's final relationship with Joe. The theme first arises during the Christmas dinner when Wopsle compares Pip to the swine among which the prodigal son of the biblical parable lived: 'Swine,' pursued Mr. Wopsle, in his deepest voice, and pointing his fork at my blushes, as if he were mentioning my christian name; 'Swine were the companions of the prodigal. The gluttony of Swine is put before us, as an example to the young' (23).

In the biblical story of the prodigal son, the son becomes discontent with his country home and desires to win fame in the city. Similarly, through the influence of Estella, Pip becomes discontent with his village home, with his future role as a blacksmith's apprentice, and with his foster-father, Joe. His childhood vision of the sanctity of his home is dispelled by his dream of becoming a gentleman:

It is a most miserable thing to feel ashamed of home. There may be black ingratitude in the thing; and the punishment may be retributive and well deserved; but, that it is a miserable thing, I can testify.

Home had never been a very pleasant place to me, because of my sister's temper. But, Joe had sanctified it, and I believed in it. I had believed in the front door, as a mysterious portal of the Temple



of State whose solemn opening was attended with a sacrifice of roast fowls; I had believed in the kitchen as a chaste though not magnificent apartment; I had believed in the forge as the glowing road to manhood and independence. Within a single year all this was changed. Now, it was all coarse and common, and I would not have had Miss Havisham and Estella see it on any account (100).

After Jaggers' visit to the village Pip accepts his new inheritance and, like the prodigal son, travels to the city to find fame and becomes involved in a life of dissipation and debt. His willingness to spend his inheritance freely is contrasted with the attitude of his city friend, Herbert, who says: "I have my own bread to earn, and my father hasn't anything to give me, and I shouldn't be willing to take it, if he had" (164). An echo of the episode in which the prodigal son lives with the swine appears when Joe comments on Pip's filthy lodgings in Barnard Inn:

. . . 'I meandersay, you two gentlemen—which I hope as you gets your elths in this close spot? For the present may be a wery good inn, according to London opinions,' said Joe, confidentially, 'and I believe its character do stand i; but I wouldn't keep a pig in it myself—not in the case that I wished him to fatten wholesome and to eat with a meller flavour on him' (209).

Pip's realization of his ingratitude to Joe, appearing first when he leaves the village, reappears violently when Pip is confronted by Magwitch in his London dwellings:

Miss Havisham's intentions toward me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me; I only suffered in Satis House as a convenience, a sting for greedy relations, a model with a mechanical heart to practise on when no other practice was at hand; those were the first smarts I had. But, sharpest and deepest pain of all—it was for the convict, guilty of I knew not what crimes, and liable to be taken out of these rooms where I sat thinking, and hanged at the Old Bailey door, that I had deserted Joe.

I would not have gone back to Joe now, I would not have gone back to Biddy now, . . . simply, I suppose, because my sense of my own worthless conduct to them was greater than every consideration. No wisdom on earth could have given me the comfort that I should have derived from their simplicity and fidelity; but I could never, never, never, undo what I had done (307-308).



Pip begins to realize his sin of ingratitude to Joe, but he fails to recognize his sin of ingratitude and inhumanity in denying the worth of Magwitch and Magwitch's feelings of love for him. During Pip's illness, Joe, whom the child, Pip, had once regarded as a large species of child, shows himself to be a true father to his prodigal son in nursing Pip and in paying his debts for him. Unlike the story of the prodigal son, however, Great Expectations does not allow an easy return of the penitent hero to the sanctity of his home. Pip discovers that there is no place for him in the village society, influenced by Pumblechook's accusation of his ingratitude, or in the blacksmith's forge. Pip cannot return home permanently like a "forgiven child" (447). The celebration upon the return of the biblical prodigal son becomes in Dickens's story the wedding celebration for Biddy and Joe. Like the prodigal son, Pip receives forgiveness from his father, but he must atone for his sins and repay his debts to Joe by assuming a humble position in self-imposed exile from his home and country.

Pip's second father-surrogate is Magwitch, the prodigal father. The image which develops the relationship between Pip and Magwitch is that of the voyage. Pip is referred to as a Telemachus by his village newspaper. The image implies the search of a son for a father and Telemachus's search for his voyaging father Ulysses. Dickens ironically inverts the significance of the image. He presents the voyager, Magwitch, in search of his son, Pip, and their reunion in Pip's London lodging: Moving the lamp as the man moved, I made out that he was substantially dressed, but roughly; like a voyageur by sea. That he had long iron-grey hair. That his age was about sixty. That he was a muscular man, strong on his legs, and that he was browned and hardened by exposure to weather (299).



Magwitch says to the horrified Pip: "'Look'ee here, Pip. I'm your second father. You're my son—more to me nor any son. I've put away money, only for you to spend" (304). Magwitch's sins against Pip are those of attempting to assert his own identity and to gain revenge upon society through Pip, whom he regards as an object, thing or piece of property which he can make into a gentleman. Pip also reacts to Magwitch as if he were a thing. Pip feels that his own quest for a gentleman's identity and social respectability has been shipwrecked and that Magwitch is a threat to his winning of Estella: "For an hour or more, I remained too stunned to think; and it was not until I began to think, that I began fully to know how wrecked I was, and how the ship in which I had sailed was gone to pieces" (307).

Pip attempts to eliminate his contact with Magwitch and preserve himself from the contamination of crime and sin by smuggling the convict out of the country by boat on the Thames river. This voyage with Magwitch brings about the true symbolic reunion of father and son. Earlier in Pip's London apartment, Pip had shrunk from Magwitch's touch as if he had been a wild beast. After the capture of the convict on the river voyage by the authorities, he takes Magwitch's hand in the boat and promises not to desert the convict who has been faithful to him. He begins to affirm his identity as a prodigal son who has been reunited with his father:

For now my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously, towards me with great constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe (423). Pip confirms an unspoken bond with Magwitch which was made in the churchyard when he was a child: "'I will never stir from your side,' said I,



'when I am suffered to be near you. Please God, I will be as true to you as you have been to me!'" (424) The bond between Pip and Magwitch is the bond of father and son and has the symbolic weight of a family relationship. In confirming his loyalty and fidelity to Magwitch and in confessing that he owes even Estella to her father, Magwitch, Pip is affirming a part of himself. He is affirming his guilt in terms of his ingratitude, his desire to seek revenge for his feelings of alienation from society in becoming a gentleman, and he is recognizing his false image of himself as innocent and socially superior. Pip's recognition of his indebtedness to and love for Magwitch leads to his prayer at Magwitch's death in which he identifies with Magwitch in a request for God's mercy. Both Magwitch and Pip at Magwitch's deathbed become like errant children in their relation to God. The relationship between Magwitch and Pip as father and son in spiritual and social terms is complex and multi-dimensional as Van Ghent suggests:

Like all the "fathers," he [Magwitch] uses the child as a thing in order to obtain through him vicarious sensations of grandeur. In relation to society, however, Magwitch is the child, and society the prodigal father; from the time he was first taken for stealing turnips, the convict's career has duplicated brutally and in public the pathos of the ordinary child. Again, in relation to Pip, Magwitch is still the child; for, spiritually committed by his 'great expectations' to that irresponsibility which has accounted for the Magwitches, Pip is projectively, at least, answerable for Magwitch's existence and for his brutalization. Pip carries his criminal father within him; he is, so to speak, the father of his father. The ambiguities of each term of the relationship are such that each is both child and father, making a fourfold relationship; and the act of love between them at the end is thus reinforced fourfold, and the redemption by love is a fourfold redemption; that is to say, it is symbolically infinite, for it serves for all the meanings Dickens finds it possible to attach to the central child-father situation, the most profound and embracing relationship that, in Dickens' work, obtains among men.<sup>61</sup>



Jaggers, who corresponds psychologically to the tyrannical, law-giving aspect of the father, may be said to be Pip's third father-surrogate. Jaggers, a king in the criminal underworld, first appears to Pip as an omnipotent, omniscient figure, allied with the parental aspect of society which is the law. Pip learns that Jagger's impersonality masks a dispensation of personal justice motivated by compassion for Estella and her mother. A fundamental ambiguity surrounds the figure of Jaggers, who asks the enigmatic and repeated question: "You know what I am, don't you?" (205) By experience Pip discovers the answers to this question. First, Jaggers is only an ordinary human being, who has feelings which are unmasked when he smiles at the discovery of his clerk's private life at Walworth. Secondly, Jaggers, as the representative of society's justice, also paradoxically functions to show the injustice of man-made laws and legal procedure in both his use of false witnesses and in his own attacks upon the institution of justice:

The magistrates shivered under a single bite of his finger. Thieves and thief-takers hung in dread rapture on his words, and shrank when a hair of his eyebrows turned in their direction. Which side he was on I couldn't make out, for he seemed to me to be grinding the whole place in a mill; I only know that when I stole out on tiptoe he was not on the side of the bench; for he was making the legs of the old gentleman who presided quite convulsive under the table, by his denunciations of his conduct as the representative of British law and justice in that chair that day (191).

Jaggers teaches Pip that human justice is imperfect in the parent society and Pip learns that the only justice is God's justice," the greater Judgment that knoweth all things and cannot err" (434). The whole question of Jagger's identity and his connection with justice is intricately related to Pip's quest for identity in society in order to seek justice for himself. Jaggers shows Pip the limitations of mankind.



The question which Jaggers asks about himself is the type of question which Pip must learn to ask about all aspects of life. He must learn to discern the reality which hides behind appearances and self-delusion. Pip learns slowly to take the advice of Jaggers, who urges him to discern the reality beneath appearances. Pip's discovery of the identity of Estella's mother is a result of this lesson. That the omnipotent and omniscient Jaggers should be surprised by Pip's revelation of Walworth and of Wemmick's private life is appropriate to Dickens's view in Great Expectations that human perception is limited and may be deceived. In learning to see Jaggers, both the formidable representative of society's justice and formidable guardian, as an ordinary man whose power and knowledge are limited, Pip is freed from subjection to society and to parental figures of authority. This experience is part of his final growth to maturity and independence.

With his mysterious washing of hands, symbolizing both involvement in and detachment from society's persecution of individuals and human sin, and in his cross-examining manner, Jaggers symbolically resembles a Pontius Pilate. But, paradoxically, he is a saviour too—the champion of criminals and inhabitants of the fallen world. Like the other father-figures, his symbolic significance and functions are complex. Joe is both a simple child, possessed of divine goodness, and a heroic, wise adult. Magwitch is both a murdering Cain and an Abel, a victim of society. Pip learns to see Joe, Magwitch and Jaggers, his three father-surrogates, as ordinary individuals with human characteristics while at the same time he experiences the symbolic weight of their roles as child-saviour, convict-saviour, and accuser-saviour. In the



process of acquiring an understanding heart, Pip learns to respect these fathers because he discovers that each is "good in his hart" (42).

Other parent-child relationships are contrasted with the young Pip's relationship with Joe and Magwitch. Herbert's desire to earn his own living and his respect both for his impoverished father and his disreputable prospective father-in-law are contrasted with Pip's passive acceptance and dissipation of his inheritance and with his shame of Joe and Magwitch. The love of Clara, Herbert's fiancée, for her ogre-like father, Gruffandgrim, is contrasted with Pip's horror of and repulsion from Magwitch, to whom he reacts as if Magwitch were a beast or monster. Another contrast with the young Pip's relationship with Joe is provided by Wemmick's devotion to the Aged at Walworth Castle with its functional cannon, contrasted with the battery where Pip had his childhood talks with Joe. The sanctity of the home, the idea that a man's home is his castle, and the value of a son's love and respect for his father become evident to the reader in the scenes in which Pip visits Walworth. Pip's shame about Joe and his lack of respect for Joe's feeling and individual worth are contrasted with Joe's respect for his brutal father because his father "were that good in his hart" (42).

The crimes of Pip toward Joe and Magwitch are sins of ingratitude and snobbery, of treating them as mere things to which he is superior. The sins of Magwitch towards Pip, Miss Havisham towards Pip and Estella, and of Mrs. Joe and her friends towards Pip are essentially the same sin: treating a person as an object. The folly of using another person as a thing and as a means to power and



a new identity is parodied in the relationship between Pip and Pumblechook, who regards himself as the founder of the young Telemachus's fortunes.

The sin of treating other people as things is involved in Pip's relationship with characters who serve as mother-surrogates in the novel. Just as Pip seems to have three fathers, so he appears to have three mothers:

Pip's three mothers are psychologically the three aspects any mother presents to her child; queenly protector, lover, and devourer. 'Brought up by hand' in more senses than one, Pip sees his sister to use Joe's term, 'a buster' . . . . He accepts Miss Havisham as a kind of 'fairy godmother', though she too is a devourer; it is as though she were David Copperfield's Aunt Betsey turned sour. Estella, formed to order by Miss Havisham, is simply an attractive extension of her, the queenly lover before whom Pip would abase himself despite her scorn. Chastened by disillusion, Pip returns home to marry Biddy, the mild comforter who replaced his murdered sister. It never occurs to him that she might love someone else; he takes her acceptance for granted.<sup>62</sup>

Pip cruelly ignores Biddy's love for him and uses her to further his education so that he may win Estella. The height of his self-delusion, inhumanity and snobbery towards Biddy appears in his statement, made after he feels that Estella has rejected him: "I should have been good enough for you: shouldn't I, Biddy?" (121) The goal of his dreams, Estella represents to Pip the status, wealth and middle-class society of Miss Havisham whom he calls his "fairy godmother."

In the earlier novels, the orphan heroes are given loving mother-surrogates and may marry women who are motherly figures. Oliver Twist constantly thinks of his dead mother while he suffers, and wishes to be reunited with her. At the novel's end, he gains an ideal mother-surrogate in the person of Rose Maylie. In the



conclusion of David Copperfield the adult David is surrounded by the loving mother-surrogates, Peggotty and his fairy godmother, Aunt Betsey. He is also married to the motherly Agnes, who is the source of his sense of identity. In his psychoanalytic analysis of David Copperfield,<sup>63</sup> Manheim argues that David's relationships with women are determined by his obsession with the image of the virgin-mother whom he had lost in childhood. In Little Dorrit Clennam's sense of identity is resolved in his relationship with Amy Dorrit, the Little Mother whom he marries. In Great Expectations I suggest that Dickens's quest to find his own identity through imposing artistic form on certain personal problems touched on personal conflicts which involved a blending of a desire for mother-love with romantic love. In the novel's denouement the reader sees that Pip can achieve a true sense of his identity and a realistic relationship with Estella only after he has ceased to connect her with his goal of gentility and after she has been separated from Miss Havisham. Pip is not allowed to marry the motherly Biddy to whom he wishes to return like a "forgiven child" (447).

The hero's desire for mother-love and for romantic love seem to be related. The reader's awareness of Pip's desire for mother-love may illuminate Pip's obsessive guilt and his relationships with Mrs. Joe, Miss Havisham, Estella and Biddy. An interpretation of the mother-son relationship involving Miss Havisham, Mrs. Joe and Estella is suggested in Moynahan's analysis of Pip's guilt.<sup>64</sup> Moynahan's interpretation is based on the suggestion of considerable psychic tension appearing underneath the overt story pattern and motivation



of the hero. This tension which Moynahan relates to the hero's guilt might be considered as a projection of Dickens's feelings attributed to Pip. Moynahan resorts to a type of psychiatric examination of what is symbolized in the novel rather than what is apparent. An understanding of this tension in terms of the mother-son relationships helps the reader to appreciate the complex of emotions which have been embodied in the novel. The complex nature of Pip's sense of guilt may be seen as a product of Dickens's technique of dream vision which will be discussed in the next chapter. His dream technique allowed Dickens to explore his problems of identity both consciously and unconsciously through the medium of fiction. As Taylor Stoehr<sup>65</sup> demonstrates and Moynahan says: "We are dealing here with an art which simultaneously disguises and reveals its deepest implications of meaning and the only clue is Pip's obsession with guilt."<sup>66</sup>

Moynahan suggests that the child Pip seeks excessive mother-love and power in his quest to be a gentleman and in his focus upon the figure of Estella, who may be said to represent a psychological extension of Miss Havisham to Pip. Pip is rejected by the three mother-figures, Mrs. Joe who brings him up by hand, Miss Havisham and Estella. Part of the young Pip's infatuation with Estella arises from her definition of his identity by analyzing his deficiencies, an analysis which corresponds to Mrs. Joe's definition of his identity. An element of revenge may be said to exist in Pip's reaction to his rejection by these mother-figures. Pip may be said to take revenge upon Mrs. Joe in stealing



food from her pantry although he is bound to do so by his compact with Magwitch. As Biddy points out, Pip's motives concerning Estella, who scorns him, may also include an element of revenge. Biddy asks Pip if he wants to be a gentleman "to spite her or to gain her over" (122). As Moynahan shows, when Pip has been frustrated or rejected by Miss Havisham, he has an hallucination of Miss Havisham, hanging like a corpse from a beam in the Satis House brewery.<sup>67</sup> Moynahan suggests that these hallucinations are projections of Pip's desires for revenge. These hallucinations may also be seen as Pip's intuitive apprehension of the suicidal aspects of Miss Havisham's philosophy of life and love and an intuitive foreknowledge of her fate. The extent to which Dickens was aware of the relationship between Pip and the devouring female figures who serve in some way as mother-surrogates, and of the hero's wishes for revenge in the face of rejection, cannot be determined, but critics like Moynahan suggest that the deepest level of Pip's guilt is involved in this relationship. Moynahan claims that Orlick's puzzling accusation of Pip's responsibility for Mrs. Joe's death is psychologically and symbolically valid in terms of the hero's desire for revenge, and in terms of his sense of guilt after hearing the story of George Barnwell's murder of his nearest relative.

Both Moynahan and Harry Stone<sup>68</sup> have discussed the dream-like, fantasy or fairy-tale quality of Great Expectations and relate that quality to the symbolic presentation of the hero's guilt. In discerning the blending of Pip's motives for power as a form of



revenge against frustration by his mother-surrogates and a desire for excessive mother-love, Moynahan says:

The fantasy element Great Expectations shares with such stories as Cinderella and Jack and the Beanstalk contains . . . two implicit motives: the drive for power and the drive for more mother-love. However, of the two, the power motive, since it involves the aggressive wish to push beyond the authoritarian figures who hold the child powerless, is likely to be more productive of guilt and consequently to be expressed with a certain amount of concealment. Thus, Jack, in the folk-tale conquers authority in the fictional guise of killing the wicked giant. But there is no attempt to disguise the fact that he steals from the giant in order to live in affluence with his widowed mother, enjoying her undivided love and attention.<sup>69</sup>

Moynahan notes that "the type of love sought in this fantasy is often a childish version of mature love. It is largely passive. It is often associated with super-abundance of the good things of life, often with the enjoyment of great wealth."<sup>70</sup> This fantasy seems to be indicated in Pip's dream of being like the knight of romance or fairy-tale who returns to the castle of Satis House to win the princess Estella, destined for him by the "fairy godmother," Miss Havisham:

She had adopted Estella, she had as good as adopted me, and it could not fail to be her intention to bring us together. She reserved it for me to restore the desolate house, admit the sunshine to the dark rooms, set the clocks a going and the cold hearths a blazing, tear down the cobwebs, destroy the vermin—in short do all the shining deeds of the young Knight of romance, and marry the Princess . . . . the house . . . had made up a rich attractive mystery, of which I was the hero. Estella was the inspiration of it, and the heart of it, of course. But though she had taken such strong possession of me, though my fancy and my hope were so set upon her, though her influence on my boyish life and character had been all-powerful, I did not, even that romantic morning, invest her with any attributes save those she possessed. I mention this in this place, of a fixed purpose, because it is the clue by which I am to be followed into my poor labyrinth. According to my experience, the conventional notion of a lover cannot be always true. The unqualified truth is, that when I loved Estella with the love of a man, I loved her simply because I found her irresistible. Once for all; I knew to my sorrow, often and often, if not always, that I loved her against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be (219).



Moynahan points also to a child's desire for mother-love and a passive security which seems to appear in Pip's supposedly mature love for Estella

who, in her metaphoric associations with precious jewels and lofty stars, comes to symbolize the final goal of his dreams of love, luxury and high position . . . . Pip learns that the world is not a vast mammary gland from which he can draw rich nourishment with moral impunity. He finds that he must hunger and struggle like all the rest. Furthermore he must accept the unhappy fact that his participation in the old dream of great expectations has hurt real people. With his awakening to reality, he develops a capacity for active self-bestowing love.<sup>71</sup>

Unlike the resolution of identity in the earlier novels, the hero's identity is resolved in terms of love for neglected and despised fathers rather than in relation to a lover who symbolically appears as an aspect of a mother. Dickens seems to insist on the hero's achievement of independence from mother-surrogates when the mature Pip discovers that he cannot marry the motherly Biddy and when he is allowed to be reunited with Estella only after he has ceased to associate her with Miss Havisham. Pip gradually learns to see Estella simply as an ordinary person and not as an abstract embodiment of his expectations of security, wealth and respectability.

One might say that psychologically Pip matures beyond the stage of desiring an unobtainable bride-mother. Estella's relationship with and marriage to the bestial Drummle also serves to reduce Estella from the image of a virgin-goddess, a sexless creature with recognizable imperfections, to the level of an ordinary woman.

However, it is only after Pip has realized his identity as a sinner and prodigal son, and after he has partially atoned for his sins in exile, that he may be reunited with Estella. In other words, Pip's



resolution of identity occurs primarily in terms of parent-son relationships rather than in terms of romantic love.<sup>72</sup>

The integration of the themes of Cain and Abel, which show Pip to be a sinner who is responsible for the sins of his own society and for those of humanity, and of the theme of the prodigal son, reveal Dickens's structuring of a religious, quasi-Christian vision of life in Great Expectations. Buried in this vision are the psychological conflicts which Dickens is exploring in terms of mother-son relationships and romantic love. On the conscious level, Dickens presents the paradoxes of the Christian faith which encompass all the mysteries of life. As Robert Stange says:

Pip's career is a parable which illustrates several religious paradoxes: he can gain only by losing what he has; only by being defiled can he be cleansed. Magwitch returns to claim his gentleman, and finally the convict's devotion and suffering arouse Pip's charity; by the time Magwitch has been captured and is dying Pip has accepted him and come to love him as a true father. The relationship is the most important one in the novel: in sympathizing with Magwitch Pip assumes the criminal's guilt; in suffering with and finally loving the despised and rejected man he finds his own real self.<sup>73</sup>



POINT OF VIEW IN GREAT EXPECTATIONS

My discussion of Pip's achievement of a sense of identity has shown that his sense of self is ultimately connected with his acceptance of his limitations and of his guilt in his relationships with other people. Dickens has placed his hero's guilt within the broad context of his vision of fallen man in a fallen world in which the child mysteriously inherits the guilt of his fathers and undergoes a redemption and atonement. This vision seems to embody the paradoxes, mysteries and ironies, involved in questions of guilt and innocence. However, in his article, "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations,"<sup>74</sup> Moynahan raises the question of the psychological nature of Pip's guilt and the extent to which Pip is guilty. In this chapter I will attempt to relate the question of the hero's guilt to Dickens's dream vision and to the question of point of view.

Moynahan points to "a certain discrepancy appearing in the narrative between the hero's sense of guilt and the actual amount of wrong-doing for which he may be said to be responsible."<sup>75</sup> This critic suggests that "Pip has certainly one of the guiltiest consciences in literature."<sup>76</sup> Moynahan rejects the view that Pip's relation to the criminal milieu of Great Expectations is one of an Everyman to a universal condition. He notes that while Pip "expiates his sins of snobbery and ingratitude by ultimately accepting the convict Magwitch's unspoken claim for his protection and help, by willingly renouncing



his great expectations, and by returning in a chastened mood to Joe and Biddy, he cannot expiate—or exorcise—his conviction of criminality, because it does not seem to correspond with any real criminal acts or intentions.<sup>77</sup> This critic goes on to claim that "if we conclude in fact that Pip is tainted with criminality, we must rest our conclusions on a symbolic reading of the coincidences of the plot."<sup>78</sup>

Moynahan finds that Pip has latent motives of aggressive violence or revenge and points to Pip's latent aggression against Mrs. Joe and Miss Havisham. He describes Pip's hallucinations of Miss Havisham, hanging from the beam at Satis House, as a projection of Pip's guilty aggression against the woman who has frustrated his desires:

. . . the novel provides abundant evidence that the imagination of a child operating under a great stress of emotion is possessed of a hallucinatory power. When Pip carries stolen provisions to Magwitch on the marshes, his guilt-ridden imagination effects a transformation of the countryside through which he passes, until even gates, dykes, banks, cattle and signpost seem to him to be pursuing him and crying out his guilt. Pip's hallucination, then, is an imaginative fantasy which both projects and disguises the boy's desire to punish his employer and to destroy her baleful power over him.<sup>79</sup>

Moynahan sees that a symbolic reading of Pip's confrontation with Orlick whom he regards as Pip's alter-ego or mirror image, provides the clue to the extent of Pip's guilt, and suggests that Pip is guilty by imaginative complicity in the murder of Mrs. Joe. "In this scene," Moynahan says, "Dickens is closest to making explicit the analogy between the hero and the novel's principal villain and criminal."<sup>80</sup> The critic writes:

We are dealing here with an art which simultaneously disguises and reveals its deepest implications of meaning, with a method which apparently dissociates its thematic materials and its subject matter into moral fable-cum-melodramatic accompaniment, yet simultaneously presents through patterns of analogy, a dramatic perspective in which apparent opposites are unified. In Great Expectations criminality is displaced from the hero on to a melodramatic villain. But on closer



inspection that villain becomes part of a complex unity—we might call it Pip-Orlick—in which all aspects of the problem of guilt become interpenetrant and co-operative.<sup>81</sup>

Pip denies the accusation of Orlick, whom Moynahan calls the "shadow image of the tender-minded and yet monstrously ambitious young hero,"<sup>82</sup> that he killed Mrs. Joe and "does not recognize Orlick as a blood relation, so to speak."<sup>83</sup> Moynahan suggests that a symbolic reading of the Orlick episode provides the most profound irony of the novel: The meaning remains submerged and is communicated to the reader through other channels than the agonized confession of a first-person narrator. Indeed the profoundest irony of the novel is not reached until the reader realizes that he must see Pip in a much harsher moral perspective than Pip ever saw himself.<sup>84</sup>

Moynahan seems to be saying that the reader must see that Pip is guilty by imaginative complicity of the murder of Mrs. Joe and that Pirrip, the narrator, does not recognize this guilt. I will attempt to show that Moynahan's interpretation arises from certain ambiguities and suggestiveness, created by Dickens's dreamlike vision which does not deal clearly with the exact nature of the hero's guilt and innocence.

Moynahan's statement suggests that the reader should see Pirrip from a point of view which is different from Pirrip's view of himself. Because the novel is structured with symbolic scenes, images, events and characters, it seems to be open to various interpretations by readers. The average reader would probably deal with the novel on the level of social reality, but critics like Moynahan who are concerned with the symbolic aspects of the novel may see deeper psychological implications in Pip's story. The Dickensian critic, Barbara Hardy says: "I know of no other Victorian novelist who has been recreated in the image of his critics so frequently and strongly as Dickens."<sup>85</sup> She



suggests, and most readers may agree with her, that critics may read into the novel's meanings which Dickens never intended. These readings of Great Expectations arise because of Dickens's use of symbolic techniques, and they vary according to the point of view of the reader. The operation of the reader's perception in assessing the full meaning of the novel and the naiveté of the hero may be related to what Wayne C. Booth calls the point of view of the "implied author."<sup>86</sup> This is the point of view which is conveyed by the total structure of a novel and may be different from the author's own view of his work. This point of view may express meanings which the author would not recognize. The reader's perception of the novel may be said to grapple with the view of Booth's "implied author." In Great Expectations the implied author's point of view is developed by the symbolic, dreamlike techniques which counterpoint and supplement the first-person narrator's perspective. Booth describes this point of view in The Rhetoric of Fiction:

Our sense of the implied author includes not only the extractable meanings and emotional content of each bit of action and suffering of characters. It includes, in short, the intuitive apprehension of a completed artistic whole; . . . . The implied author chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read.<sup>87</sup>

However, Booth's statement that "in the distinction between author and implied author, we find a middle position between the technical irrelevance of talk about the artist's objectivity and the harmful error of pretending the author can allow direct intrusions of his own immediate problems and desires"<sup>88</sup> does not seem applicable to an analysis of Dickens's Great Expectations. I suggest that the intrusion of these problems creates the ambiguity concerning Pip's guilt and innocence which is conveyed in



the symbolic, dreamlike technique of the novel. I also suggest that Moynahan is wrong to disregard Dickens's conscious structuring of the spiritual level of Pip's story in terms of the education of an Everyman because this level provides a context in which the ambiguities and blending of the hero's guilt and innocence belong.

Certain objections might be raised to Moynahan's understanding of the implied author's point of view. First, Moynahan's view of the novel stems from psychiatric criticism of the Jungian kind which sees the characters as a projection of Pip's self. However, it might be pointed out that these characters are also ordinary people with independent identities on the level of social reality. Moynahan resorts to a kind of psychiatric imposition of meaning upon the book without dealing with the significance of events and with the characters as ordinary people. His suggestion that Pip's sense of guilt matched by Pip's psychological desire to murder superficially explains otherwise inexplicable pitches of intensity in Pip's reactions to certain things which do not seem to arise from Pip's obvious relationships with people. However, one could argue that Moynahan's interpretation seems to strain the realistic implications of the novel. One might feel that Moynahan has created another novel which Dickens did not write.

Secondly, Moynahan rests his argument upon Dickens's device of character splitting as a form of displacing Pip's guilt. But it might be pointed out that this technique is a valid and traditional literary convention inherited from Fielding, as well as being an aspect of a psychiatrist's probing of displaced guilt. Thirdly, if Moynahan's type of psychiatric criticism is pursued to a further point, the reader sees



that Pip is actually innocent of Mrs. Joe's murder. Pip openly expresses hostility to Mrs. Joe in his descriptions of her treatment of him in childhood and admits that his sense of injustice was childishly distorted. Dickens is showing Pip's lessons in discerning reality and one of these lessons is to combat his over-active imagination which has led to self-delusion and possibly to an exaggeration of his sense of guilt. Dickens is also presenting the complexities and ambiguities in life and in the hero's motivations. Both of these factors should enter into the reader's understanding of the Orlick episode. Pip denies Orlick's accusation, and it is right that he should do so. He is not in fact guilty of Mrs. Joe's murder unless by inadvertently supplying the murder weapon. Orlick killed Mrs. Joe. However, Pip is guilty of the desire to rebel against Mrs. Joe. His capacity for revenge is indicated by his sense of satisfaction at Pumblechook's consuming of the tarwater, by his desire to pull Wopsle's nose, and by his willingness to kill Orlick in the sluice-house. The revenge motif in relation to the hero is developed throughout the novel. Perhaps Dickens might have allowed Pirrip to recognize some guilt for his former latent desire for revenge and violence which is implicit in Orlick's accusation. On the other hand, at the time of his confrontation with Orlick, Pip is learning to discern reality and his denial of his guilt is an assertion of reality.

I suggest that there may be three reasons for Pirrip's refusal to acknowledge any truth in Orlick's accusation. First, Dickens is presenting a portrait of the limitations of human knowledge, and he may intend that we should see Pirrip not totally understanding the exact nature of his guilt and innocence. Secondly, Dickens presents a picture of the ambiguities



and mysteries in life and therefore may make the question of the exact nature of the hero's guilt and innocence deliberately ambiguous in terms of his psychological motivation. Thirdly, in my view, because of the autobiographical elements in the novel related to Dickens's probing of his own overwhelming sense of guilt, he does not pursue the exact nature of Pip's guilt and innocence to the point where his hero will recognize both that he is innocent in respect to Mrs. Joe's murder and that he is guilty of a murderous desire for revenge. Instead, I think that Dickens focuses on the Christian vision of man in a fallen world and Pip's inheritance of universal guilt. This vision explains Pirrip's heavy moral condemnation of himself and his feverish desire for forgiveness and atonement. Contrary to Moynahan's argument, the most profound irony in the book, perhaps unrecognized by Dickens, may be not that Pip is guiltier than he admits but that he does not clearly perceive the exact nature of his innocence and guilt in terms of his desire for revenge.

The ambiguity of the hero's guilt, suggested by the Orlick episode, may be a result of what Taylor Stoehr calls Dickens's "literary dream manner" and Dickens's "dreamer's stance."<sup>89</sup> I will discuss how the implied author's point of view is communicated to the reader through Dickens's handling of plot and the novel's symbolic texture, and how it is related to Dickens's literary dream manner. I will also discuss the advance in Dickens's skilful handling of first-person narration in this novel.

In his book, Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance, Stoehr claims that in the nature of his contents, in the kinds of relation between structure



and contents, and in the attitude of the teller to the telling, "more than most writers, Dickens tells his stories as if they were dreams."<sup>90</sup>

Stoehr also says that Dickens's novels "present their meanings as dreams do, by symbols and patterns which have hidden implications and connections."<sup>91</sup> The process of both Pip's and the reader's discovery of the real significance of Pip's experiences resembles the unravelling of the true meaning of a dream which is hidden. The reality of Pip's relationships with other people and society emerges for Pip with the return of Magwitch from under Pip's "dreamlike experience of life. Pip's experience of life in youth and adolescence is falsely ordered by his imagination and his dream of winning Estella. The young Pip reacts to the events of his life as if they held the vague meaning of dreams. In his youth, Pip experiences a sense of foreboding and reacts to the appearance of the one-eyed convict, the reappearance of the stolen file and the appearance of the two-pound notes as if they were strange omens: The dreamlike premonitions and warnings make it clear that he is in danger from hidden unknown forces, which, just as in dreams, seem to exist outside him and his control, but which, actually express his deepest feelings and inclinations, the fate he makes for himself. And exactly as in dreams, the apparent and hidden meaning need not—must not—be clearly distinguished at first, for the essence of the dream symbol is its ability to express many things at once, to combine and condense these in a single image.<sup>92</sup>

To some extent, the reader shares Pip's dreamlike apprehension of the world and experiences with Pip, "a sense of a peculiarly discontinuous world, under which there seem to lurk behind the facade of normal occurrences some secret meaning, every now and then intruding itself as though in warning of imminent catastrophe."<sup>93</sup>

In Great Expectations the reader can see other characteristics which resemble those of a dream. The vividness and photographic realism



of certain scenes, and images, the hallucinatory quality produced by the montage technique and juxtaposition of scenes and images, the appearance of the characters as such archetypal figures as fairy godmothers, the sense of magical signs and omens, the animation of inanimate objects and the sense of a fragmented world which is all in pieces and yet which is somehow mysteriously ordered are all characteristics of a dream. Dickens blends the hallucinatory, supernatural and fairy-tale quality of Pip's story with the attempt by the first-person narrator to explain the significance of Pip's experiences. However, as in dreams, the novel's full meaning is presented by symbolic scenes, actions and events, possessing hidden patterns and connections and operating in a reflexive way. Pip learns to see the patterns and connections of reality which are hidden by his dream of Estella and the reader, by understanding the dreamlike, symbolic patterning of the novel, comes to see beyond Pirrip's narration and interpretation of his experiences.

Various critics have commented on the dreamlike way in which Dickens tells Pip's story. In his article, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations,"<sup>94</sup> Harry Stone gives an analysis of the fairy-tale and supernatural qualities of the novel. Van Ghent comments on the way in which Dickens shows Pip's dreamlike apprehension of reality and the relationship between it and his guilty desires:

... Dickens uses a kind of montage in Great Expectations, a superimposition of one image upon another with an immediate effect of hallucination, that is, but one more way of representing his vision of a purely nervous and moral organization of reality. An instance is the scene in which Estella walks the casks in the old brewery. Estella's walking the casks is an enchanting ritual dance of childhood . . . but immediately present in the tableau is the suicidal figure of Miss Havisham



hanging by her neck from a brewery beam. Accompanying each appearance of Estella—the star and jewel of Pip's expectations—is a similarly disturbing ghost, an image of unformed dread. When Pip thinks of her, though he is sitting in a warm room with a friend, he shudders as in a wind over the marshes. Her slender knitting fingers are suddenly displaced by the marred wrists of a murderer. The technique of montage is that of dreams, which knows with awful precision the affinities between the guilt of our desires and the commonplace of our immediate perceptions.<sup>95</sup>

The way in which the plot unfolds in Great Expectations may be compared to the way in which the true, hidden meaning of a dream emerges upon analysis. In the earlier novels, the overt meaning of the hero's story appears in the main plot line and hidden meanings appear in the double plot. The double plot in these novels never fuses totally with the main plot to touch the hero's understanding of himself. In earlier novels, the hero is innocent and Dickens uses a double plot such as the story of Steerforth, Emily and Rosa Dartle in David Copperfield to transfer inflammable or taboo elements such as sexual violence to these figures. As R. D. McMaster says, "David's darker feelings being transferred to his sinister friend, Steerforth"<sup>96</sup> leave David rather colourless. In Dickens's novels, as Stoehr says:

The typical Dickensian plot . . . is complicated . . . except in Great Expectations by the doubling of the complete sequence. . . . The plots are interrelated, with elements from the strands of one plot, also functioning in those of the other, with innumerable parallels of character, action and setting; nevertheless they remain two fundamentally separate stories, and the lines of action, although sometimes crossing and often running parallel for short stretches, never merge in a single structure . . .<sup>97</sup>

The double plot, the logic of images and symbols, the parallelism of scene and the doubling of figures who may be said to be alter-egos for the hero, embody the hidden significance of the hero's story just as the hidden meaning of the dream is buried. However, in Great Expectations, the double plot is replaced by the hidden strand of Pip's story, revealing his



guilt. Just as the real meaning of the dream emerges upon analysis, so the real significance of Pip's story, called the Newgate strand by Stoehr, emerges from under the Satis House strand. The Newgate and Satis House strands parallel Pip's inner struggle as Stoehr shows:

Pip's sense of guilt, and the vagueness and intensity of which make it seem almost like original sin, is symbolized by the Newgate motif of crime and punishment; his pride and ambition are reflected in the Estella-Miss Havisham configuration of jewelled elegance grounded in decay and hurt vanity . . . the hidden strand emerges and the illusion of the apparent strand crumbles away.<sup>98</sup>

Stoehr describes the way in which Pip's discovery of the reality behind the dream emerges in relation to the spiritual level of Pip's story:

Throughout the unfolding of the plot, while the apparent strand still holds the attention in the hero's world, the isolated forewarnings of the hidden strand are connected as they arise, with some vaguely felt guilt which infects the hero. With the full emergence of the hidden strand, the nature of the guilt begins to appear; in a way, the hero's very being is tainted, and he has further aggravated his sin of existence by avoiding all recognition of its nature, by clinging to a false view of reality and his place in it. All along he has deserved to be punished and now the discovery of the hidden strand presses this truth upon him—it initiates an atonement.<sup>99</sup>

Dickens has used a technique resembling dream work in both concealing and revealing the real meaning of Pip's story on the level of plot to develop suspense and to capture the reader's imagination. Pointing to the peculiar character of Dickens's images which both hide and reveal their significance, Stoehr relates this quality to the principle of dream-work which Freud calls "displacement and condensation."<sup>100</sup> Dickens's metaphors, images and names both conceal and foreshadow their significance in the story. In introducing the name of Abel Magwitch, Dickens both reveals and subtly conceals the Cain-Abel relationship between Pip and Magwitch which Pip will come to recognize emotionally. The name, Magwitch, suggests the strange reversal which will occur in Pip's final relationship



with Magwitch. Magwitch first appears ominously and mysteriously to Pip in the misty marshes and, like a male witch, he seems to exercise an evil power over Pip. Ironically, however, he serves as a type of fairy godfather who both grants Pip's wish to be a gentleman and also finally brings to Pip a sense of identity.

In Dickens's habitual disguise and display in the double plot of the earlier novels, Stoehr sees a technique resembling Freud's principle of "secondary elaboration." Secondary elaboration is the imposition of order on the dream to draw attention away from the true meaning of the dream:

The job of secondary elaboration is to provide the dream with a kind of order and sense which is like that of everyday perception and understanding, even though the dream materials thus regulated are either stubborn or slippery, hard for the stiff fingers of the logical waking mind to grasp . . . the process may be partly unconscious (a continuation of the regard for representability which operates through the dream) and partly conscious (in telling one's dreams) . . . Characteristically the superimposition of this order is calculated to draw attention away from the true meaning of the dream—since it substitutes "reasonable formulations" for the strange juxtapositions and meanderings of dream thought . . . secondary elaboration produces a map and timetable of events, a formal grid of circumstance that overrides the significance of the dream's juxtapositions and unifications.<sup>101</sup>

In Dickens's earlier novels, this secondary elaboration operates through Dickens's disguising of inflammable elements of the story in the form of the double plot which does not fuse into the hero's story to determine his sense of guilt.

The reader may ask why Dickens chooses to use symbolic dreamlike techniques in telling Pip's story. In Chapter II, I suggest that there are autobiographical elements in Great Expectations and I discuss Dickens's attempt to find his own identity and to resolve his problems in the writing of this novel. In his career as actor, dramatist, and novelist,



Dickens seems to have been rejecting the reality of his own life and to be searching for further life to fill out his own. To Wilkie Collins he wrote just after his last performance in his play, The Frozen Deep:

I want to escape from myself. For when I do start up and stare myself steadily in the face, as happens to be my case at present, my blankness is inconceivable—indescribable—my misery, amazing.<sup>102</sup>

That Dickens identified his life with his writing is indicated by his statement:

However strange it is to be never at rest, and never satisfied and ever trying after something that is never reached, and to be always laden with plot and plan and care and worry, how clear it is that it must be, and that one is driven by irresistible might until the journey is worked out!<sup>103</sup>

Dickens both escaped from ordinary reality into a dreamlike immersion in his novels, which became a reality for him, and also, as David Copperfield indicates, became aware of the need to work out the journey or to undertake the quest for self-knowledge and identity in his writing.

In this dreamlike immersion in his work in which he used his own life as story material, Dickens's powerful imagination naturally sought the language of dreams both to explore and reveal, and to hide or conceal the emotional conflicts with which he was dealing. In Great Expectations he came very close to facing himself and the reality which underlay his dreams. In doing so, he came partially to terms with what Stoehr calls his "dream content," the recurring nucleus of problems of class, sex and violence which appear in his novels. Stoehr writes:

Feeling dissatisfied and misplaced in his own life and driven to understand why in the manner of a dreamer he created a world where feelings could represent themselves in action and where he might test them against the possibilities he could imagine . . . the language of dreams gave him a way of simultaneously saying and doing as though he were acting out his desires instead of just talking about them. And he did precisely that, for as he continued to press his imaginative inquiry, he discovered more and more what he felt and came steadily closer to the truth about himself



and his life. Like his heroes he had put himself in a situation where he could not avoid recognition—the very plot forced it upon him.<sup>104</sup>

Dickens's replacing of the split between the double plot and the main plot with the fusion of the hidden strand of meaning into the hero's story and his use of a first-person narrator in Great Expectations has significance for his own confrontation with reality. Stoehr writes:

Within the framework of the double plot, events from one world can . . . "randomly" affect those of another; but with a first-person narrator telling his own story, everything tends to cohere merely by virtue of being noticed and reported by the same involved consciousness. There can no longer be any pretense that the narrator is detached or absent. The dream must be taken as reality; responsibility for it is fixed.<sup>105</sup>

The dream to which Stoehr is referring is the dream content of Dickens's novels and is embodied in the hidden strand of Pip's guilty connection with Magwitch. Stoehr suggests that Dickens, like Pip who discovers the reality behind the dream of Estella, partially discovers the reality which lay behind the dream of reality of his novel writing. When the reader studies Dickens's novels as if they were dreams, he discovers in Great Expectations an integration and clarification of Dickens's dream content:

In Great Expectations Dickens finally found a means—very much dependent on his use of the first-person there—to bring his forbidden contents into relatively direct relations with his hero. The double plot disappeared and the usual dream displacements and distortions became part of the hero's story—by necessity since it was he who experienced and reported them.<sup>106</sup>

Stoehr, however, shares Moynahan's view that the first-person narrator's interpretation of his experiences is incomplete and relates this incompleteness to the autobiographical elements in Dickens's novel. Stoehr points to Pip's failure to comment fully on certain discoveries or experiences which occur after Magwitch's return and relates this failure to Dickens's own reluctance to face the nature of Pip's guilt:



This "character recognition" . . . comes slowly and painfully, for the very reason that it involves giving up so much. Not only Pip, but Dickens himself holds back from the true meaning of the dream, because it contains his own fears and desires as well as the hero's . . . Dickens is like the dreamer who attends only to the surface of the events presented because it is precisely their hidden meanings and emotional implications he fears to face.<sup>107</sup>

Stbehr suggests that, despite the replacing of the isolated double plot by the emerging hidden strand, in refusing to comment through his narrator on these discoveries, Dickens is still using a form of secondary elaboration to hide the psychological significance of these experiences in terms of his hero's guilt. Thus, Dickens has retained the disguising technique of this secondary elaboration at the level of incident in the plot but has modified the larger structural design to omit the secondary elaboration in the use of the isolated double plot:

. . . his concern with greater unity and integrity was partly an expression of his need to come to terms with the emotional substance of his fiction, to bring the elements of his dream to more direct awareness and control, (Great Expectations shows his success); but the unifying device he used had another, even contradictory purpose—that of hiding from himself the true significance of the content by layering it over with tissues of superficial unity and order, patterns of secondary elaboration which concealed as much as they revealed about the deeper meanings of the novel.<sup>108</sup>

The discoveries which Pip makes after Magwitch's return fall into the pattern of secondary elaboration on the level of incident. These discoveries are: Compeyson's deceit which Magwitch relates to Pip; Orlick's violence directed at Pip; and Estella's parentage. These deal with the problems of class and society, the problem of crime, guilt, and violent punishment, and the problem of sex. Stoehr is vague in expressing his ideas about the deeper psychological meanings of these discoveries and in his speculations related to Dickens's life. However, Stoehr shares Moynahan's view that the characters represent a part of Pip with which



he has to come to terms. For Stoehr, Magwitch represents both the good and evil in Pip with which Pip must come to terms:

With the discovery of Compeyson's (society's) duplicity and of Estella's parentage, the ensuing acceptance of Magwitch as a "good" father-figure leaves a gap in Pip's defenses. Accepting the good in Magwitch means that Pip will somehow have to face the evil as well, and it comes all in a rush with Orlick's attack. The connection with Magwitch is made explicit in the novel. When Pip answers the suspicious summons to the sluice-house, he knows that he endangers himself if he goes, but jeopardizes Magwitch if he does not . . ."109

Stoehr suggests that Dickens cannot allow Pip, who has become "good" through his secondary discoveries forcing his alliance with Magwitch, to express his violence. In describing Pip's encounter with Orlick, Stoehr says:

Not that he goes merely for Magwitch's sake; rather, because he now accepts Magwitch, all the violence which has been storing up in the novel is suddenly released. Logically, of course, the violence should come from . . . Pip himself; but Dickens cannot allow a character now turned "good" to strike such a blow. The good characters rarely get into fights, but are attacked "from behind," as Wrayburn is in Our Mutual Friend. Orlick is at hand for the violence, and his superficial unrelatedness to the rest of the action makes it easier for Dickens to open all the stops and revel in the danger and hatred.<sup>110</sup>

Both Moynahan and Stoehr suggest that the violence of Orlick's hate is a displacement of Pip's own violence which is disguised in the symbolic dreamlike nature of the episode. Stoehr says:

As in dreams, such meanings in Dickens are suffused with emotion and a large part of the effort involved in rendering them goes into disguise and distortion to relieve anxiety, to avoid taboo subjects, and to make the emotional content both literally and figuratively presentable.<sup>111</sup>

Moynahan claims that

The entire scene has a nightmarish quality. This is at least partly due to the weird reversal of roles, in which the innocent figure is made the accused and the guilty one the accuser. As in a dream, the situation is absurd yet like a dream it may contain hidden truth.<sup>112</sup>

Stoehr says that Pip's purgation and atonement is too easily acquired



and that Dickens has allowed other people to suffer for Pip's sins.

Stoehr also writes:

. . . Although he is continually writing about sex and violence and even making them the core of motivation in his novels . . . he is unable to integrate them in his plots; they fester behind the action, like a dreadful cancer, or they may be encapsulated in the plot, like irritating bits of foreign matter which must be rendered harmless by layers of secretion.<sup>113</sup>

This critic is pointing to Dickens's inability to make explicit Pip's desire for revenge in the Orlick episode in terms of his acceptance of guilt and also to Dickens's vicarious experience in violence through the action of Orlick:

The seeming free-floating lump of violence and passion—like the sluice-house scene in Great Expectations may be thought of as a kind of Dickensian iceberg whose basis in repressed desire lies hidden under the calm reflecting waters of plot and circumstance . . . Orlick is never really integrated into Pip's life . . . [Dickens's] success lies in allowing the problem to appear in his work where it finds statement and embodiment.<sup>114</sup>

Stoehr, however, claims that Dickens's artistry in handling this episode has made it fit into the psychological development of Pip. He further says that the appropriateness of the Orlick passage to the present stage of Pip's psychological development no doubt contributes to its power, but the peculiar quality of that power comes from the isolation of the incident from the major threads of the plot. Dickens cannot make the violence arise directly out of Pip's character any more than he can imagine Charles Darnay actually guilty of the sins of his uncle and father; so the fantasies of evil are displaced and float on the surface of the story . . . nevertheless Dickens always grounds even his wildest fantasies in a strong pattern of emotional development which underlies the novel, so that no matter how irrelevant the scene may be in the sequence of motivation and event, it still seems to have a right to be there.<sup>115</sup>

As I suggested earlier, Dickens may be disguising something from himself and the reader in this episode. He seems unable to allow Pip's recognition of his own desire for revenge, implicit in Orlick's accusation. Dickens may have found some vicarious satisfaction in the violence



of Orlick. I suggest that Dickens is disguising from himself the exact nature of the guilt and innocence of the hero. Stange refers to Dickens's remark, made a few years after he had written Great Expectations, that he felt that he was "irretrievably tainted."<sup>116</sup> Stange says that "compared to most writers of his time the Dickens of the later novels seems to be obsessed with guilt."<sup>117</sup> Dickens seems to have gone only so far in probing the question of guilt and innocence through the mind of his narrator, Pip. In telling Pip's story and relating Pip's sins to those of fallen, ordinary man in an imperfect world, Dickens still has not expiated a basic sense of guilt. It is possibly this sense of guilt which permeates the novel and gives rise to such interpretations of the hero's guilt as those of Moynahan and Stoehr.

Great Expectations marks an advance over David Copperfield in Dickens's handling of first-person narration. In David Copperfield Dickens begins to experiment with first-person narration as a means of recounting his hero's and his own spiritual autobiography. Great Expectations shows Dickens's greater control in the handling of time shifts in the narrator's distance from the story. The novel also reveals the addition of an ironic stance from which the adult narrator views his childhood and adolescence. This stance replaces the sentimental, reminiscent stance of the adult David. The tone of moral condemnation by the adult narrator also replaces the tone of self-justification of the adult narrator in David Copperfield.

In David Copperfield Dickens begins to experiment with the handling of time shifts in the adult narrator's recounting of his life.



In passages which he calls "restrospects," David breaks from his adult point of view, expressed in the past tense, and describes certain major experiences, particularly in childhood and adolescence, in the present tense. The present tense serves to convey the sense of immediacy of such events as his life with Aunt Betsey or Dora's death.

In Great Expectations the temporal shifts in point of view are smoother and more intricately blended than in David Copperfield. As Robert Partlow shows in his article, "The Moving I: A Study of Point of View in Great Expectations,"<sup>118</sup> the narrating "I" in the novel moves at varying degrees of temporal distance from the events of the story. The first-person narrator is both the "I-as-I-am-now" of the young Pip, both child and young man, and the "I-as-I-was" of the older Pirrip, the unpretentious, relatively sophisticated adult. The temporary distance of the narrator moves from the remote distance of Pirrip to the immediate perception of events by the young Pip through the means of a subtle blending of Pirrip's moral or ironic comments with the young Pip's perceptions. The points of view of both Pirrip and Pip may be interwoven with the immediate dramatic presentation of events which forms part of the implied author's point of view.

The scene in which Pip learns of his expectations at the Jolly Bargeman begins with the purely dramatic presentation of the encounter between Wopsle, the pompous church clerk, and the terrifying attorney, Jaggers. Partlow claims that in the dramatic presentation of this scene, Pip's "I" has scarcely more significance than the impersonal value of 'he.' In the beginning of the scene Pip is only an observer of events. The narrative moves from the encounter between Jaggers and



Wopsle to the young Pip's conclusion that Miss Havisham is the secret benefactor who will make possible his dream of becoming a gentleman.

The older Pirrip inserts a moral comment about Joe's goodness which places the narrated event in the past and also causes the reader to anticipate Pirrip's moral judgment upon himself in the future narration:

'Pip is that hearty welcome,' said Joe, 'to go free with his services to honour and fortun'! as no words can tell him. But if you think as Money can make compensation to me for the loss of the little child—what come to the forge—and ever the best of friends!

O dear good Joe, whom I was so ready to leave and so unthankful to, I see you again, with your muscular blacksmith's arm, as solemnly this day as if it had been the rustle of an angel's wing!

But I encouraged Joe at the time. I was lost in the maze of my future fortunes, and could not retrace the by-paths we had trodden together (133).

To describe the operation of narrative perspective in this novel, Partlow uses the image of a man showing moving films of his life and explaining them with sad, moral and ironical comments. The commentator may not comment at all and may allow the film to show itself dramatically. The commentator may hasten the time sequence as Pip hastens it when he passes briefly over the period of his apprenticeship with Joe or the period of his self-imposed exile for eleven years with Herbert's firm. The commentator may regard himself from a distance as he would regard a casual acquaintance. Often the older Pirrip appears unable to remember the exact nature of his feelings or the events of the past. This vagueness controls the unfolding of the plot, allows a suggestion or understatement of a feeling or event which will be more fully described later in the plot. The narrator's vagueness also realistically presents a middle-aged man's attempt to remember his childhood and youth through a film of memory An example of this vagueness occurs when the narrator says: "I reposed complete confidence in no one but Biddy; but I told



poor Biddy everything. Why it came natural for me to do so, and why Biddy had a deep concern in everything I told her, I did not know then, though I think I know now" (89-90).

Tonal variations indicate subtle shifts in time of the point of view of the narrator. These variations may involve the subtle handling of diction and intertwining of both the child's reactions to life and that of ironical, sophisticated Pirrip. In the following illustration the child's repetitive "sing-song" questioning, giving the effect of the immediacy of the child's reactions, is blended with the older Pirrip's ironic comparison of Joe's education with steam:

"Lord!" he continued, after rubbing his knees a little, "when you do come to a J and O and says you, 'Here, at last is a J-O, Joe,' how interesting reading is!"

I derived from this last, that Joe's education, like Steam, was yet in its infancy. Pursuing the subject, I inquired:

'Didn't you ever go to school, Joe, when you were as little as me?'  
'No, Pip.'

'Why didn't you ever go to school, Joe, when you were as little as me?' (41)

The narrator presents with remarkable realism the child's reaction to and view of life which appears in David Copperfield. Like Oliver Twist, David and Pip are bullied and misused. Unlike Oliver, they are not lifeless symbols of injustice. They display the vitality, feelings and perceptions of ordinary, imaginative children. In these two novels Dickens recreates the visual and imaginative world of children with humor and realism. He portrays the child's observation of details. David's earliest memories of his nurse, Peggotty, are memories of the touch of her finger which felt like a pocket nutmeg-grater, the pink dome of St. Paul's cathedral on her workbox, and the buttons which popped from her dress in her agitated state of affection for him. A child's



irrational fears and sense-experience appear in David's description of his childhood home:

Here is a long passage—what an enormous perspective I make of it!—leading from Peggotty's kitchen to the front door. A dark store room out of it, and that is a place to be run past at night; for I don't know what may be among those tubs and old tea-chests, when there is nobody in there with a dimly-burning light, letting in mouldy air come out at the door, in which there is the smell of soap, pickles, pepper, candles and coffee, all at one whiff (14).

In Great Expectations Dickens intentionally avoided duplication: "To be quite sure that I had fallen into no unconscious repetitions, I read David Copperfield again the other day, and was affected by it to a degree you would hardly believe."<sup>119</sup> David's sense-experiences in childhood are repeated in Pip's childhood experiences, but Pip's experiences are different. David's memory of Peggotty's roughened finger is varied in Pip's memory of the ridgy effect of Mrs. Joe's wedding ring "passing unsympathetically over the human countenance" (48). David's intense sense of smell is paralleled in Pip's reaction to Pumblechook's corn-chandler's shop:

In the same morning, I discovered a singular affinity between the seeds and the corduroys. Mr. Pumblechook wore corduroys and so did his shopmen; and somehow, there was a general air and flavour about the seeds so much in the nature of corduroys, that I hardly knew which was which (49).

The child's imaginative conceptions about the relationships between the dead and the living appear in David's fears, arising from his mother's story of Lazarus, that his dead father will be resurrected. In Great Expectations a child's confused fancies about the dead appear in Pip's reactions to his family's tombstones:

As I never saw my mother or father and never saw any likeness of either of them . . . my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout dark man with curly black hair. From the character "Also Georgina Wife of the Above", I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly (1).



The unique scale of the child's perception of the adult world appears in Pip's description of Mr. Hubble's legs which were "extraordinarily wide apart, so that in my short days, I always saw some miles of open country between them when I met him coming up the road" (22). Just as the distinction between the living and the dead is blurred in the child's imagination, so the distinction between animals and people is dismissed as the child's vision invests the animal world with human attributes. When Pip flees from Mrs. Joe's home with the stolen food for Magwitch, the cattle in the fields through which Pip passes appear to him to assume human features:

The cattle came upon me with like suddenness, staring out of their eyes and streaming out of their nostrils, 'Halloa, young thief!' One black ox, with a white cravat on—who even had to my awakened conscience something of a clerical air—fixed me so obstinately with his eyes, and moved his blunt head around in such an accusatory manner . . . that I blubbered out to him, 'I couldn't help it, sir! It wasn't for myself I took it!' (14)

Although Pip's childhood view of life is presented with immediacy and insight into the genuine sufferings of childhood, at the same time the older Pirrip inserts moral and ironical comments which help to distance the events and enable the reader to judge Pip from Pirrip's moral point of view. I suggest that Dickens handles Pirrip's point of view in this way to prepare the reader for the final moral judgments which Pirrip will make. As the first-person narration progresses, the objective distance between Pip and Pirrip appears to lessen and the ironical, urbane stance with which Pirrip describes the events of his childhood and youth almost disappears in the third stage of Pip's story. The older Pirrip's narration becomes increasingly serious and subjective in tone. The coming together of the immediacy of events as Pip verges



on maturity and the subjective tone of the narrator, Pirrip, in the last part of the story develops the story's serious, moral aspect. However, I suggest that as Dickens progressed further into the telling of Pip's story through his first-person narrator, he became more personally involved in the emotional elements of his dream content or the personal problems with which he was dealing. In other words, the ironic stance of the older narrator which appeared in the first part of the story has given way to elements in Dickens's dreamer's stance which create a greater sense of subjective narration near and at the story's conclusion.

Despite the fact that the reader's sense of the implied author's point of view may cause him to question the degree of Pip's achievement of self-knowledge and realization of the exact degrees of his guilt and innocence, Great Expectations represents a great advance in Dickens's handling of the hero's quest for identity in relation to his hero's guilt. Dickens's Pirrip shows that he has acquired a sense of identity which is more intensely realized by himself than that identity achieved by the heroes of Dickens's earlier novels. Pip's sense of self also possesses greater moral, psychological, social and particularly spiritual significance than that of any of Dickens's earlier heroes. Dickens's expansion of the spiritual level of the hero's quest for identity in which Pip learns to see himself as an ordinary man and sinner in a fallen world provides a unity and meaning to the novel which is not fully achieved in earlier novels. In this novel about a boy's growth to maturity, Dickens has combined artistic, thematic and autobiographical concerns to present his most penetrating analysis of an individual's quest for identity.



## NOTES

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Stange, "Expectations Well Lost: Dickens' Fable for His Time," 9.

<sup>2</sup> Van Ghent, "On Great Expectations," 135.

<sup>3</sup> Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations," 674.

<sup>4</sup> Stange, Expectations Well Lost: Dickens' Fable for His Time," 17.

<sup>5</sup> Van Ghent, "On Great Expectations," 135.

### Chapter I:

<sup>6</sup> Greene, The Lost Childhood, 56.

<sup>7</sup> Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 155-156, 157.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>13</sup> Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," line 67.

### Chapter II:

<sup>14</sup> Nisbet, "The Autobiographical Matrix of Great Expectations," 10.

<sup>15</sup> Wilson, The Wound and the Bow, 1-93.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 4-8.

<sup>17</sup> Dickens, in autobiographical fragment quoted by Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens, 26.



<sup>18</sup>Johnson, Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph, 686-687.

<sup>19</sup>Dickens, letter to Thomas Mitton, 1844, Huntington MS., quoted by Ada Nisbet, in "The Autobiographical Matrix of Great Expectations," 13.

<sup>20</sup>Dickens, quoted in Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens, 35.

<sup>21</sup>Johnson, Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph, 657, discusses The Haunted Man and says: "In the first scene with the Spectre, all of Redlaw's feelings about his life are, with slight modification, what Dickens felt about his own."

<sup>22</sup>Wilson, The Wound and the Bow, 7.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>24</sup>Manheim, "The Personal History of David Copperfield," 21-43.

<sup>25</sup>Jung, Essays on a Science of Mythology, 83.

<sup>26</sup>Dickens, Preface to David Copperfield, xii.

<sup>27</sup>Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels, viii.

<sup>28</sup>Dickens, The Life of Our Lord, 10. The publishers quote the following statement by Dickens in the foreword: "I have always striven in my writings to express veneration for the life and lessons of Our Saviour, because I feel it; and because I rewrote that history for my children every one of whom knew it from having it repeated to them long before they could read and almost as soon as they could speak."

<sup>29</sup>Dickens, Letters, II, 596, Forster, 1854.

<sup>30</sup>Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations," 663.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 664.

<sup>34</sup>Johnson, Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph, 5. In describing Charles Dickens's father, William, Johnson says: "... his manner was ornately genteel. No one would have guessed that his father, William Dickens, had been a steward at Crewe Hall or his mother before her marriage a servant in the house of the Marquess of Blandford, in Grosvenor Square; and that his mother was . . . housekeeper at Crewe."

<sup>35</sup>Nisbet, "The Autobiographical Matrix of Great Expectations," 12.



<sup>36</sup> Dickens, Letter to Mrs. Watson, 1857, in the Huntington MS., quoted in Johnson's Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph, 911.

<sup>37</sup> Dickens, Letters, II, 620-621, Forster, 1855.

Chapter III:

<sup>38</sup> Van Ghent, "On Great Expectations," 136.

<sup>39</sup> Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations," 674.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 675.

<sup>41</sup> Van Ghent, "On Great Expectations," 133.

<sup>42</sup> Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations," 676.

<sup>43</sup> Van Ghent, "On Great Expectations," 135.

<sup>44</sup> Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, 157.

<sup>45</sup> Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels, 250.

<sup>46</sup> Van Ghent, "On Great Expectations," 128.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels, 267.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>50</sup> Van Ghent, "On Great Expectations," 131-132.

<sup>51</sup> Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations," 672.

<sup>52</sup> Moynahan, "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations," 64-77.

<sup>53</sup> Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations," 672-673.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 673.

Chapter IV:

<sup>55</sup> Van Ghent, "On Great Expectations," 135.



<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 134.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 136.

<sup>58</sup>Marcus in Dickens: from Pickwick to Dombey traces a pattern of conflict between fathers and sons in Dickens's earlier novels and suggests that elements of hostility to the father, arising from Oedipal situations, appear.

<sup>59</sup>Manheim, in "The Law as 'Father'", 18, discusses the various forms of the father-image in Dickens's novels and particularly in Bleak House. He claims that in Dickens's novels "the father-image was marked by that ambivalence, that mixture of filial acceptance and oedipal aggression which is characteristic of the workings of the Unconscious."

<sup>60</sup>McMaster in his Introduction to Great Expectations, viii.

<sup>61</sup>Van Ghent, "On Great Expectations," 157.

<sup>62</sup>McMaster in his Introduction to Great Expectations, viii.

<sup>63</sup>Manheim in "The Personal History of David Copperfield," 38, points to the obsessive number of child-wives and virgin-mother figures in this novel and claims that David "cannot see that what he requires in a wife, she must, paradoxically lose at the moment she becomes a wife! . . . How could we expect in nineteenth century Dickens even so much as an inkling of the suspicion that he must look for the source of his obsession, not to his eighteenth year, not even to his adolescence or childhood, but back to the very inception of the Oedipus-feeling in the various stages of infancy."

<sup>64</sup>Moynahan, "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations," 60-79.

<sup>65</sup>Stoehr, Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance.

<sup>66</sup>Moynahan, "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations," 69-70.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 60-79.

<sup>68</sup>Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations," 663-691.

<sup>69</sup>Moynahan, "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations," 67-68.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.



<sup>72</sup>Pip has undergone the process, described by Freud in the Twenty-First Lecture in A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis and reiterated by McMaster in his Introduction to Great Expectations, ix: "From the time of puberty onward the human individual must devote himself to the great task of freeing himself from the parents; and only after this detachment is accomplished can he cease to be a child and so become a member of the social community. For a son, the task consists in releasing his libidinal desires from his mother, in order to employ them in the quest of an external love-object in reality; and in reconciling himself with his father if he has remained antagonistic to him, or in freeing himself from his domination if, in the reaction to the infantile revolt, he has lapsed into subservience to him."

<sup>73</sup>Stange, "Expectations Well Lost: Dickens' Fable for His Time," 11.

<sup>74</sup>Moynahan, "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations," 60-79.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 75.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Barbara Hardy, "Martin Chuzzlewit", 108.

<sup>86</sup>Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, 73.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 73-74.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 75.

<sup>89</sup>Stoehr, Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance, 135. In describing his method of analyzing Dickens's novels as if they were dreams, Stoehr says: ". . . Dickens occupies a peculiar position halfway between the



allegorist and the ordinary novelist. The work of the latter may often be read on two levels, but a psychoanalytic interpretation is not necessarily called for, since the writer's method is usually self-conscious and unhallucinated: to whatever degree he may use his imagination, he does not ordinarily employ it as freely and spontaneously as any dreamer does in dreaming. The ordinary writer does not invite his reader into the ambiguous world of dreams, where order and meaning are directed by unconscious needs and purposes. But that is just what Dickens does. . . . the allegory may be read for the literal or the allegorical meaning or both; but there is a distinct separation between the two. They do not interpenetrate in the way that the levels of meaning in a dream do."

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 69.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 113.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 111.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>94</sup>Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations," 663-691.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 133.

<sup>96</sup>McMaster in Introduction to Great Expectations, ix.

<sup>97</sup>Stoehr, Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance, 228-229.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 112.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 227.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 81.

<sup>102</sup>Dickens, Letter in the Pierpont Morgan Library, quoted by Edgar Johnson in Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph, II, 878.

<sup>103</sup>Dickens, The Letters of Charles Dickens, II, 765.

<sup>104</sup>Stoehr, Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance, 251.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 230-231.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 203.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 114, 123.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 170.



<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 121-122.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 235.

<sup>112</sup>Moynahan, "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations,"  
66.

<sup>113</sup>Stoehr, Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance, 267.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 269.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 268-269.

<sup>116</sup>Stange, "Expectations Well Lost: Dickens' Fable for His Time,"  
17.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Partlow, "The Moving I: A Study of Point of View in Great Expectations," 122-131.

<sup>119</sup>Dickens, quoted in the preface to Great Expectations, vi.



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